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Van 't Schip To Depart Heart At Season's End

Melbourne Heart FC advises Head Coach John van 't Schip will depart from the Club following the completion of his contract at the end of the current Hyundai A-League season.

The AFC Ajax legend informed Melbourne Heart FC's board and management he has elected to return home to Europe.

Chairman Peter Sidwell expressed his gratitude to van 't Schip for his contribution to the foundation of Melbourne Heart FC, saying his values and ethos will forever remain part of the fabric of the Club.

"We wish to advise our inaugural Head Coach John van 't Schip will depart the Club following the completion of the current season," Sidwell said.

"John arrived in Melbourne with a clear vision for the establishment of this Club, as a proponent of the fundamental belief in challenging the status quo by demonstrating the importance of developing youth and instilling an ethos underlined by playing attractive, attacking football.

"Drawing on the methods of former mentors Johan Cruyff and Louis van Gaal, John duly delivered on his promise, offering unparalleled opportunity for development and growth to some of our most exciting young talents, in addition to uncovering a number of diamonds in the rough.

"We are grateful to John for his on and



John van't Schip heads back to Europe.

off field contribution to our Club, and hope the end of his tenure doesn't mark the end of a relationship, but simply an evolution of our current one."

Appointed as Heart's inaugural Head Coach in October 2009, van 't Schip arrived in Melbourne with a mandate to implement an overarching football philosophy, designing the blueprint which would ultimately be identified as integral to the Club's identity.

Following a 14-year playing career, which saw van 't Schip earn over 41 caps for the Netherlands, including selection for the 1988 European Championships and 1990 FIFA World Cup, and make over 400 appearances for AFC Ajax, van 't Schip commenced the transition into management.

While van 't Schip was initially installed as a coach at AFC Ajax's renowned youth academy, the former winger even-

tually progressed to the prestigious role of Head Coach of Jong Ajax, guiding future stars which included World Cup runners-up Wesley Sneijder, Rafael van der Vaart, John Heitinga and Nigel de Jong.

Van 't Schip was later appointed Assistant Coach of the Dutch national team, working alongside AC Milan legend and former team mate Marco van Basten during the Oranje's 2006 FIFA World Cup campaign and 2008 European Championship.

Melbourne Heart FC will immediately commence its search for a new Head Coach, with a view to having a candidate in place for the next pre-season.

Milicic favourite to land Heart job

Online bookmaker tomwaterhouse.com has installed Ante Milicic as the \$2.50 favourite to be the head coach of Melbourne Heart at the start of the next A-League season with everyone else in its market – including Ernie Merrick, Kevin Muscat and Mehmet Durakovic – at double-figure odds. "Milicic has served his coaching apprentice not only under outgoing Heart boss John van't Schip but also with Sydney United and the Young Socceroos, making a in-house appointment the favourite outcome by a fair margin," said Tom Waterhouse, Managing Director of tomwaterhouse.

Heart Boss Odds	
\$2.50 Ante Milicic	\$34 Kevin Muscat
\$11 Frank Farina	\$51 Mehmet Durakovic
\$13 John Aloisi	\$51 Franz Straka
\$13 Tony Popovic	\$51 Gianfranco Zola
\$13 Ange Postecoglou	\$67 Ron Smith
\$15 Branko Culina	\$67 Dave Mitchell
\$15 Aurelio Vidmar	\$101 Mark Bosnich
\$17 Graham Arnold	\$101 Craig Foster
\$17 Lawrie McKinna	\$101 Harry Kewell
\$17 Ernie Merrick	\$101 Robbie Slater
\$21 Miron Bleiberg	
\$21 Paul Okon	
\$21 Jan Versleijen	
\$26 Rini Coolen	
\$34 Roy Keane	

com. "It's Milicic's job to lose but there are some other contenders, some obvious such as Frank Farina (\$11), John Aloisi (\$13) and Ange Postecoglou (\$13) and some less so. For example, one guy who could fancy the gig is Milicic's brother in law, current Crystal Palace assistant Tony Popovic (\$13). "It would, however, be a huge surprise if Merrick (\$17), Muscat (\$34) or Durakovic (\$51) led the Heart into battle next term given their associations with Melbourne Victory." Media pundits Mark Bosnich, Craig Foster and Robbie Slater are listed at \$101, as is Harry Kewell.

Pre-Season Cups

City of Greater Geelong Cup
The Geelong pre-season competition for the City of greater Geelong Cup kicks off on Friday at Bell Park Sports Club. North Geelong plays Geelong at 7.10 pm with both clubs looking to use the competition to try out new and young players for the upcoming season. The other four clubs taking part begin their campaigns on Sunday night. Corio plays Surfcoast at 6 pm followed by Bell Park versus Geelong Rangers at 7.10 pm.
The predecessor of the competition, the Geelong Advertiser Cup began at Bell Park in 1981.

Where Eagles Dare
Richmond Eagles have some friendlies on Saturday at Kevin Bartlett Reserve, 2.30 and 4.30 pm. The U21's are playing Singapore U17's and the Seniors are playing Singapore U19's.

Moreland Mayor's Charity Cup
Moreland Wolves Soccer Club would like to announce that they are hosting the Moreland Mayors Charity Cup.
VENUE: Reddish Reserve, Cnr Domain & Middle St, Hadfield 3046
DATE : 25th & 26th February 2012
3rd & 4th March 2012
COST: \$5.00 Donation going to a charity. Children under 16 free
Competing Clubs include: Moreland Zebras, Moreland United, Moreland City, Moreland Wolves, Pascoe Vale, Brunswick City, Fawkner SC, North Lions, Oak Park SC.

Anthony Condello Cup 2012
Fawkner Soccer Club will be holding a major Pre season tournament in 2012. Therefore if you are a FFV registered club we would like to invite you to join us and be a part of this exciting tournament.
The tournament will be held over three weekends starting on Saturday 10th March and ending on Sunday 25th March 2012. This year we will be holding twilight matches on our synthetic pitch.
All age groups from under 9's to under 16 Boys and Girls are invited to attend.
In 2012 we will be introducing an OVER 35 Men's Competition Limited for 6 teams only
Team Entrance fee is \$100.00 per team.
This entrance fee will allow us to have official referees to officiate all games including semis and finals. This also includes a team trophy and medals for the winners and runners up.
The closing date for entries will be Tuesday 1st March 2012. For more information please contact Alex Wright - 0435 816 418

Northcote City News
Northcote City travel to Apex Reserve, the home of Mirabella Cup Quarter Finalists and the feel good story of last year's season Cobram Victory to play fellow VPL side Hume City in a friendly encounter on Saturday 4th February at 5:00pm.
Both clubs have embraced the idea of taking the game to the regional community and will indeed conduct a clinic for the junior players in the Cobram and surrounding district from 3:00pm – 4:30pm on the day of the game also at Apex Reserve.
Northcote City President Peter Kotsiris had this to say on the historic friendly, "we were initially approached by Craig Carley the coach of Cobram Victory with the concept, we thought it was a wonderful idea and our way of putting back into the regional football communities of Victoria, plus the fact that Northcote City has had wonderful success with players from regional centres like Trent Rixon and of course Hayden D'Agostino who is a Cobram boy and really looking forward to playing at his old home. We then spoke with a couple of VPL club's who were interested in playing on that weekend but Hume City were by far the most keen so we managed to get the game organised for this weekend which is fantastic. I can't thank Craig and Cobram Victory enough for their efforts so far, they have been outstanding".
Northcote City have also strengthened their squad for this year's VPL season with the signings of Pasquale Vizzari from Green Gully, Alex Rojas from Bentleigh Greens, James Stefanou from Melbourne Knights, Zane Sole from Waitakere United in New Zealand and Parys Okai from England via Western Australia and Adelaide City.
The club is still in negotiations with a few players and is confident of a good showing in season 2012.

Vale Bill Collins

The Australian football community is mourning the loss of Bill Collins, a former Physiotherapist for the Socceroos, Northern Spirit and Glasgow Rangers who passed away suddenly on Friday 27 January 2012.

Born on 28th October 1953 in Manly, NSW, Bill's parents moved the family back to their hometown of Glasgow in Scotland when he was 16 years old.

After completing high school, Bill studied physiotherapy at Queens College, Glasgow. Later he was appointed as the Club Physiotherapist at Glasgow Rangers during the Grahame Souness and Walter Smith era's in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

In 1994 Bill and his family left Scotland and moved back to Australia. Soon after his arrival in Sydney, Bill became the owner and principal of the Mosman Physiotherapy & Sports Injury Centre a position he held until he sold the business in 2009.

Bill began his tenure as the Socceroos Physiotherapist in 1996 and finished in 2000. During his involvement with the Socceroos, Bill was very well-known for his high degree of professionalism, cha-

risma and sense of humour. He was also instrumental in mentoring the current Qantas Socceroos Head Physiotherapist Les Gelis and former Qantas Socceroos Physiotherapist, Phil Coles, who is now the Head Physiotherapist at Liverpool FC in the English Premier League.

Along with the Socceroos Bill was also the Physiotherapist at Northern Spirit in the former National Soccer League from 1997-2004 and later became the Director of Football. Bill's dedication and commitment to the Northern Spirit Football Club was unmatched and he was truly the life and soul of the club.

After selling his Physiotherapy practice, Bill and his wife moved to Hawks Nest on the mid north coast of NSW where he had been living in semi-retirement for the past three years.
Bill is survived by his wife Anne, sons Will & Jamie and daughter Julie.
In recognition of his services to football, Glasgow Rangers wore black-armbands in honour of Bill during their Scottish Premier League match against Hibernian last weekend.

A funeral service will be held at 1:15pm, on Friday 3 February 2012 at St Mary's Church, Manly. All former colleagues, patients and friends are invited to attend the service.

Beekmans released on compassionate grounds

DUTCH midfielder Paul Beekmans has been released from the remainder of his contract with Gold Coast United on compassionate grounds following sad news that the illness to a member of his family has worsened.

A popular figure at United, Beekmans returned to Holland earlier in the month to be with his relatives and yesterday expressed a need to remain in his homeland for the foreseeable future.

Gold Coast CEO, Clive Mensink, said the club was fully supportive of Beekmans' request and wished the United

vice captain well.

"We were contacted by Paul over the weekend and given the very difficult circumstances he faces with the illness in his family we have agreed to cease his commitments to the club," Mr Mensink said.

"It is important that Paul remains in Holland so he can focus on what is a very unfortunate and distressing situation.

"Naturally, our thoughts and prayers are with Paul and his family. We are all thinking of him and wish him all the very best during what is an extremely difficult time."

Ibini inks new Mariners deal

Central Coast Mariners can confirm ambitious attacker Bernie Ibini has put pen to paper on a new two-season contract with the Club.

Having burst onto the Australian football scene via standout performances for the Yellow and Navy's National Youth League (NYL) and Hyundai A-League team last season, Ibini has cemented his place as one of the nations' top young talents this campaign.

In 17 matches for the Mariners this term Ibini has netted four times and made two assists – form which has made the 2011 Qantas Young Socceroos representative the target of a number of rival Hyundai A-League sides.

Nevertheless, Ibini said he was pleased to extend his stay with the Club that gave him his first opportunity in professional football.

"They've [Central Coast Mariners] been my first professional Club and they've been really good to me so far," Ibini said. "Hopefully I can continue to do well for the seasons that I've signed."

Rewarded with promotion to the Yellow and Navy's Hyundai A-League squad having finished the 2010/11 NYL season as top scorer with 12 goals, Ibini added that he feels the guidance of former Qantas Socceroos striker and mentor Graham Arnold has been invaluable to his development. As such, the opportunity to continue working with the wily tactician is an opportunity Ibini found too good to refuse.

"He's [Arnold] already taught me a lot about my heading because he was a good header of the ball back in his day. He's taught me a lot with my runs off the ball and stuff like that, so he's been really good for me so far," he said.

Mariners Head Coach Arnold welcomed the confirmation of Ibini's capture for a



Bernie Ibini will be a Mariners for another two years.

Photo: JOHN DEWBERRY

further two Hyundai A-League campaigns, however emphasised that the striker still has plenty of work to do before he reaches his full potential.

"One thing that we tried to work on was getting our young boys re-signed and after Trent Sainsbury getting Bernie Ibini signed so quickly is fantastic for the Club. Now he can just concentrate on football," Arnold said.

"Bernie's shown at the end of last season and this season the talent that he's got, but he's just got to get stronger and got to spend more minutes on the field playing every week against grown men. "It's a great experience for him with the ACL coming up and that's going to develop him even more."

Central Coast Mariners Chairman, Mr

Peter Turnbull, added: "It's one thing to continually be the Club that develops high quality, young Australian talent, but being able to sign them to extended contracts as first team regulars is another."

"This is a great coup for the Central Coast Mariners and we look forward to seeing Bernie's progression over the next two seasons," Turnbull concluded. Ibini's re-signing adds to the Mariners' recent retention of left full back Joshua Rose and defender Trent Sainsbury. Striker Mitchell Duke, midfielder Anthony Caceres and right side utility James Oates were also recently promoted to the Central Coast Mariners Hyundai A-League 2012/13 squad.

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SCOREBOARD

TABLE	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 Central Coast Mariners	18	12	4	2	30	13	17	40
2 Wellington Phoenix	19	9	3	7	27	21	6	30
3 Brisbane Roar	19	8	5	6	34	22	12	29
4 Perth Glory	19	8	4	7	26	25	1	28
5 Melbourne Heart	19	7	5	7	28	26	2	26
6 Sydney FC	19	6	6	7	24	29	-5	24
7 Newcastle Jets	19	6	4	9	22	30	-8	22
8 Melbourne Victory	19	4	9	6	24	30	-6	21
9 Adelaide United	19	4	8	7	20	33	-13	20
10 Gold Coast United	18	3	6	9	20	26	-6	15

THIS WEEK	Week 18	Fixture	Venue	Local	AEDT
	Fri 3 Feb 2012	Adelaide United v Wellington Phoenix	Hindmarsh Stadium	7:30pm	8:00pm
	Sat 4 Feb 2012	Central Coast Mariners v Brisbane Roar	Bluetongue Stadium	5:30pm	5:30pm
	Sat 4 Feb 2012	Melbourne Heart v Melbourne Victory	AAMI Park	7:45pm	7:45pm
	Sun 5 Feb 2012	Sydney FC v Newcastle Jets	Sydney Football Stadium	5:00pm	5:00pm
	Mon 6 Feb 2012	Perth Glory v Gold Coast United	nib Stadium	7:00pm	10:00pm

NEXT WEEK	Week 19	Fixture	Venue	Local	AEDT
	Fri 10 Feb 2012	Melbourne Victory v Central Coast Mariners	AAMI Park	8:00pm	8:00pm
	Sat 11 Feb 2012	Newcastle Jets v Melbourne Heart	Ausgrid Stadium	5:30pm	5:30pm
	Sat 11 Feb 2012	Sydney FC v Perth Glory	Sydney Football Stadium	7:45pm	7:45pm
	Sun 12 Feb 2012	Wellington Phoenix v Brisbane Roar	Westpac Stadium	5:00pm	3:00pm
	Sun 12 Feb 2012	Gold Coast United v Adelaide United	Skilled Park	4:30pm	5:30pm

ROUND 19 RESULTS

Newcastle Jets 0 Wellington Phoenix 1 (Muscat 58') Crowd 11, 694 at Ausgrid Stadium	Sydney FC 2 (Karol Kisel 71m, Bruno Cazarine 89m) Gold Coast United 1 (Ben Halloran 55m) Crowd: 8,541 at Sydney Football Stadium
Melbourne Heart 1 (Germano 31) Brisbane Roar 1 (Berisha 69) Crowd: 7118 at AAMI Park	Perth Glory 4 (Smeltz 13, 34p, Sterjovski 41p, Andrezinho 88) Melbourne Victory 1 (Kewell 67) Crowd: 12,000 at nib Stadium

TOP GOAL SCORERS

11 - Besart Berisha (Roar)
9 - Shane Smeltz (Glory)
7- Matt Simon (Mariners), Ryan Griffiths (Jets), Archie Thompson (Victory), Serge va Dijk (Adelaide Utd)
6- Carlos Hernandez (Victory), Jeremy Brockie (Jets), Mate Dugandzic (Heart), Mitch Nichols (Roar), Bruno Cazarine (Sydney FC)



Another two goals against Adelaide Utd catapults Shane Smeltz into second place

A-LEAGUE TEAM OF THE WEEK ROUND 19

Compiled by Steven Talevski



GK: Ben Kennedy – Newcastle's number one kept a clean sheet that ensured the Jets their first win away from home since round 22 last season.

RB: Manny Muscat – Muscat was a surprise inclusion into the Phoenix match day squad after leaving his pregnant wife in Melbourne. However he was indeed needed in the Phoenix defence as he made an important clearance from a Michael Marrone's cross that was destined to fall on the head of Heart striker Eli Babalji.

CB: Michael Thwaite – Thwaite scored a stunning late equaliser against his old side to share the spoils in Tasmania to the delight of his team mates and manager Miron Bleiberg. The stunning goal was also his first in his professional career.

LB: Fabio – The Brazilian defender scored his first goal for the Victory as he fired a shot from a tight angle to find the back of the net after a deflection from Liam Reddy in an encouraging performance against Sydney FC.

CDM: Ben Kantarovski – The Olyroo had a terrific game in front of the back four helping Newcastle to a clean sheet. Kantarovski also played the ball through to Jobe Wheelhouse for the game's only goal to upset the Brisbane Roar.

RM: Leo Bertos – The New Zealand international set up Wellington's second goal against Melbourne Heart

with a dangerous whipped cross which was meet by Chris Greenacre who headed the ball into the back of net. Unfortunately Bertos was stretched off late in the game with an injury but is a chance to face Adelaide United this weekend.

CM: Liam Miller – The former Celtic and Manchester United midfielder scored his first goal in the A-League after weaving his way through the Adelaide United defence to put a strike into the bottom left corner of the net as Perth charge into the finals.

CM: Jobe Wheelhouse – The Jets skipper fired home the only goal at Suncorp Stadium to hand his side a surprise one nil victory over reigning champions Brisbane Roar.

LM: Harry Kewell – The Soccerroo was a constant threat against the Gold Coast and scored a terrific free kick.

ST: Paul Ifill – A double from the Phoenix forward gave them a 3-1 victory over the Heart and moved them into second position on the A-League table.

ST: Henrique – The Brisbane attacker was unlucky not to be on the score sheet as he was questionably ruled offside as he broke through the Jets defence. Henrique was also denied a number of times by Ben Kennedy but was a shining light for the Roar in a disappointing result.

Star Man

Paul Ifill
Wellington Phoenix



The Barbadian international had another brilliant performance for the Phoenix scoring two goals in their 3-1 victory over Melbourne Heart.

The win moved Wellington into second position while the striker is now on five goals in his injury disrupted season.

Ifill's ability to find the back of the net and to create chances for his team mates has made him one of the best imports the A-League has seen.

If Wellington is to mount a serious challenge in the finals, Ifill could well lead Wellington to become New Zealand's first football side to make an Australian Grand Final.

Thank God It's GW on a Friday... **Now available at all good newsagents every Friday**
Also available at Heart & Victory & Jets & Adelaide home games



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Melbourne Victory



2

Sydney FC



2

Match Details

Melbourne Victory 2 (Isaka Cernak 45', Fabio 45 + 2')
Sydney FC 2 (Bruno Cazarine 56', Sebastian Ryall 90')
Venue: AAMI Park
Referees: Strebre Delovski
Attendance: 20,053

Melbourne Victory: 21 Ante Covic, 2. Matthew Foschini, 3. Fabio, 5. Mark Milligan, 8. Grant Brebner, 10. Archie Thompson (9. Jean Carlos Solorzano, 80'), 13. Diogo Ferreira, 16. Carlos Hernandez (11. Marco Rojas 63'), 19. Isaka Cernak , 22. Harry Kewell, 23. Adrian Leijer (c)

Unused substitutes: 20. Lawrence Thomas, 4. Petar Franjic

Yellow cards: Diogo Ferriera 59'
Red cards: Nil

Sydney FC: 1. Liam Reddy, 4. Pascal Bosschaart, 5. Michael Beauchamp, 7. Brett Emerton (6. Hirofumi Moriyasu 31'), 8. Karol Kisel (11. Dimi Petratos 73'), 9. Bruno Cazarine, 10. Nick Carle, 15. Terry McFlynn, 19. Mark Bridge, 21. Scott Jamieson, 23. Rhyan Grant (2. Sebastian Ryall, 88')

Unused substitutes: 20. Ivan Necevski

Yellow cards: Pascal Bosschaart 45 + 1'
Red cards: Nil

By Daniel Quinn

Former Victory defender Sebastian Ryall has scored a 90th minutes equaliser against his former club to end the encounter 2-2.

Isaka Cernak and Fabio gave the hosts a first-half lead before Bruno Cazarine and then Ryall in stoppage time equalised. Victory however won't feel too good after having a host of chances and holding the lead for most of the second-half.

After Victory's 4-1 defeat to Perth Glory Jim Magilton made four changes with Rodrigo Vargas, Marco Rojas, Matthew Kemp and Leigh Broxham making way for Fabio, new signing Mark Milligan, Grant Brebner and Carlos Hernandez. Sydney coach Vitezslav Lavicka made one change with the injured Terry Antonis making way for Bruno Cazarine.

Victory started off with a fast tempo with Harry Kewell down the left but his cross was cleared before Isaka Cernak could get onto it by Scott Jamieson.

In the first twenty minutes neither side could create any clear cut chances however Sydney did try some long range efforts from Cazarine and Nick Carle.

Archie Thompson could have made a great chance but his first touch was awful after Kewell robbed the ball off Terry McFlynn.

On 24 minutes Mark Bridge got in a great position and shot straight at Ante Covic in goals but the experienced 'keeper fumbled the ball before the Victory defence cleared. Two minutes later Carle curled an effort from the edge of the box but Matthew Foschini got in the way and blocked.

Carlos Hernandez next put in a curling free-kick only for Rhyan Grant to miss the clearance. Kewell was at the back post but failed to put his shot on target.

Cazarine then turned just inside his opponent's box but his effort was too weak to trouble Covic.

Just before half-time first-half substitute Hirofumi Moriyasu burst into the box before crossing for Karol Kisel but the midfielder's left foot shot was saved by Covic.

Right on half-time Isaka Cernak opened the scoring. Foschini put in a great ball before Thompson touched down for Cernak whose left footed finish was smashed into the bottom corner.

Two minutes later Victory pounced on Kisel's poor clearance to score two goals in three minutes. Fabio broke down the left beating two defenders before shooting from an acute angle. The effort subsequently flicked off Liam Reddy for Fabio to score his first A-League goal.



Sydney FC's Liam Reddy leaves the near post unguarded as Fabio's effort squeezes between the sticks. Photo: TIM SIZE

In the opening minute of the second-half Thompson was played in by a long Arian Leijer ball and was one-on-one with Reddy but the 'keeper was victorious with a great save.

Sydney skipper McFlynn was next to test Covic but his long effort was comfortably saved by the former Soccerero goalkeeper. Cazarine then jumped out Milligan but the Brazilian's header went wide.

On 55 minutes Victory could have extended the lead but after Hernandez was played in by Thompson the Costa Rican shot wide while off balance.

Only one minute later the Sky Blues scored one goal back. Carle's initial effort was spilled by Covic which was subsequently finished by

Cazarine. Carle was causing havoc through the centre and played in Bridge but his strike was fired over.

On 67 minutes Fabio was looking for his second. The Brazilian's free-kick was saved fantastically by Reddy in goals for Sydney. Bridge next tried his chances to score an equaliser but his effort from the left side of the box was saved once again by Covic.

Second-half substitute Marco Rojas came on with some energy and took a shot on target but Reddy saved comfortably.

With eight minutes left Jamieson curled in a great free-kick but as Covic couldn't get to it the ball drifted just wide.

Fabio next put in a great corner only for Reddy to punch which the ball then fell for Rojas but the Kiwi winger put his strike over from 5 yards out.

88th minute substitute and former Melbourne Victory defender Sebastian Ryall snatched a point for the visitors. Jamieson's free-kick fell for Ryall who picked home on 90 minutes to score his first goal of his career.

Victory jump back to seventh after Adelaide's point over Newcastle whereas Sydney temporarily stays in the top six.

Melbourne Victory coach Jim Magilton believed his side probably deserved the late equaliser by Ryall. "I think we probably deserved it. Credit goes to Sydney for keep

going, they kept pushing. I think it was a bit of naivety on our part, obviously it is a confidence thing and it will be nice to win ugly. It was just a confidence thing and we need to break that down."

"Tonight I think we played a good quality but at the end of the first-half we lost the concentration and a good quality opponent punished us twice. They were very close to scoring a third one in the second-half but they didn't and I think we were still alive and we got one and came back into the game. I think the boys did a quite good performance today. At the end we put up an extra strong player up front and we scored and we scored a lucky goal."



Fabio turns away to celebrate after scoring from an acute angle.

Photo: ANITA MILAS



Victory players mob Isaka Cernak after first blood is drawn.

Photo: ANITA MILAS



FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 10
Kick-off 8.00pm. AAMI Park

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Brisbane Roar

0

Newcastle Jets

1

Match Details

Brisbane Roar 0 Newcastle Jets 1 (Jobe Wheelhouse 23')
Saturday, 28 January 2012
Suncorp Stadium, Brisbane
Referee: Ben Williams
Crowd: 9,293

Brisbane Roar: 1. Michael Theoklitos (Gk), 2. Matthew Smith (C), 3. Shane Stefanutto, 5. Ivan Franjic, 6. Erik Paartalu (18. Luke Brattan 65'), 8. Massimo Muroccca, 10. Henrique (21. James Meyer 65'), 16. Mohamed Adnan, 17. Mitchell Nichols 22. Thomas Broich, 24. Nicholas Fitzgerald
Substitutes Not Used: 4. Matthew Jurman, 20. Andrew Redmayne (Gk)

Yellow Cards: Nil
Red Cards: Nil

Newcastle Jets: 1. Ben Kennedy (Gk), 4. Nikolai Topor-Stanley, 5. Tiago Calvano, 6. Ben Kantarovski, 10. Ruben Zadkovich, 11. Tarek Elrich, 12. Jobe Wheelhouse (C) (9. Michael Bridges 65'), 13. Sung-Hwan Byun, 23. Ryan Griffiths (2. Taylor Regan 87'), 24. Francis Jeffers (8. Jeremy Brockie 65'), 25. Jacob Pepper
Substitutes Not Used: 19. Matthew Nash (Gk)

Yellow Cards: Tiago Calvano 55', Ben Kennedy 90+3'
Red Cards: Nil

Jets silence Roar at Suncorp

By Jarrod Ellis

Newcastle Jets bounced back from their frustrating draw mid-week with Adelaide United to defeat Brisbane Roar 1-0 at Suncorp Stadium on Saturday night. A first half goal from Joel Wheelhouse was enough to secure both the three points and Newcastle's first away win since they defeated the now defunct NQ Fury in January last year. Despite their poor road record the Jets have traditionally found Suncorp Stadium a happy hunting ground, and the win on Saturday night extended their record in this fixture to seven wins to Brisbane's one. With Besart Berisha sitting out the game due to suspension Brisbane started the match without a recognised striker. That lack of a finisher in the front line was obvious as despite Brisbane creating several clear cut goal scoring opportunities they were unable to produce a goal. The final stats told the story as Brisbane recorded forty-nine balls into the box and had fifteen shots yet didn't trouble the scoreboard. The Roar had an excellent chance to open the scoring in the first minute of the match but Mitch Nichols scuffed his shot from only nine yards out and the ball was forced away. Broich and Henrique almost combined for a goal in the fourth minute, the German ran at the Jets defence before sliding a pass through to the Brisbane winger but it was a touch too heavy and Ben Kennedy collected the ball instead. The Roar defence was looking shaky early on and Michael Theoklitos was called into action to deny both Jacob Pepper and Francis Jeffers.



Jobe Wheelhouse pierces the Roar defence to score the only goal. Photo: ADRIAN GAGLIONE

Despite having the better of the match Brisbane were made to pay for their spurned opportunities in the 23rd minute when Newcastle found a way through the Roar defence. A simple give and go between Ben Kantarovski and Joel Wheelhouse left Matt Smith out of position and Wheelhouse raced into the Roar box before hitting a low shot that crept under the hand of Theoklitos and into the net. Nikolai Topor-Stanley made a crucial intervention for the visitors in the 33rd

minute, getting his foot to the ball as Thomas Broich attempted to setup Henrique for what would have been a one-on-one chance with Kennedy. The second half started off with chances for both sides in the first minute but some last effort defending ensured the score didn't change. The Brisbane side were brought to their feet in the 54th minute when an excellent pass from Erik Paartalu left Henrique one-on-one with Ben Kennedy but the play was incorrectly called back for offside, drawing

groans from the crowd of 9,923 who turned up despite the poor weather that has plagued south-east Queensland for the past week. Newcastle was increasingly on the back foot as Brisbane searched for an equaliser. Henrique and Broich were the main threats for the home side but despite their best efforts the Roar weren't able to conjure a goal against a defence that was lead by excellent performances from Topor-Stanley and Tarek Elrich. Mitch Nichols was unable to convert

another good chance for Brisbane in the 68th minute, the midfielder blasted over the bar from inside the box, a poor controlling touch letting him down after Brattan played him through with a quick pass. With Brisbane unable to find a goal and Newcastle struggling to break the Roar's hold on possession tempers began to fray and referee Ben Williams had to step-in in the 72nd minute to calm things down when Ruben Zadkovich brought down Nichols. As time wore on Brisbane continued to press for another goal, a shot from Thomas Broich on the left of the area was blocked by Tarek Elrich with eight minutes to go. A foul on Massimo Muroccca in the 90th minute set the stage for Mohammed Adnan to repeat his heroics against Sydney two weeks ago but the Bahraini's shot from the resultant free-kick clipped the top of the wall and went out for a corner. With five added minutes Brisbane had the time to find another dramatic winner but Newcastle held firm and snatched a much needed win. After the match Roar captain Matt Smith was disappointed with the manner of the defeat. "I think we copped a silly goal at a critical time and I think it really set us back," he said. "That's been the case over the last eight or ten matches, we cop the first goal which puts you on the back foot and means you're always chasing games. "When teams put ten men behind the ball and defend for the half or sixty minutes, it makes it hard for us to try and break them down."

Match Stats

3	Saves	3
5	Attempts on target	5
8	Attempts off target	1
58%	Possession	42%
9	Corners	2
4	Offsides	1
11	Fouls committed	10

Tiago Calvano and Sung-Hwan Byun embrace after the Jets cause a major upset at Suncorp. Photo: ADRIAN GAGLIONE



Roar's Henrique can't quite steer the ball into the net as Jets keeper Ben Kennedy holds his ground. Photo: ADRIAN GAGLIONE

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Wellington Phoenix

Melbourne Heart

3

1

Match Details

Wellington Phoenix:3
(Ifill 3, 64, Greenacre 54)
Melbourne Heart: 1 (Terra, 34)

Phoenix: 1.M.Paston, 2.M.Muscat, 3.T.Lochhead, 6.T.Brown, 7.L.Bertos (11.Daniel 77'), 8.P.Ifill, 9.C.Greenacre, 18.B.Sigmund, 21.D.Sanchez (19.J.Downey 82'), 22.A.Durante, 24.A.Smith.

Yellow cards: Bertos.
Red cards: None

Heart: 1.C.Bolton, 2.M.Marrone, 3.B.Hamill (23.M.Dugandzic 68'), 6.M.Thompson (7.R.Worm 54'), 8.K.Sarkies, 11.A.Terra, 13.J.Germano, 16.A.Behic, 18.C.Good, 19.E.Babalj.

Yellow cards: None
Red cards: None

Match Stats			
1	Saves	3	
8	Attempts on target	2	
5	Attempts off target	6	
47%	Possession	53%	
3	Corners	5	
9	Offsides	1	
12	Fouls committed	12	

High flying Phoenix into second place

By Joe Gallagher

Now is a very good time to be a Phoenix fan. The good times have only improved after another win – their third on the bounce – this time a 3-1 victory against a faltering Melbourne Heart in Wellington.

The three points lifts Wellington into second place on the A-League ladder and condemns the visitors to a six match winless streak which now stretches the length of January.

Coach John van't Schip fielded the exact same starting line-up as the one he did for Heart's last outing, a 1-1 home draw with Brisbane Roar. They were desperate to snap the worst unbeaten run of their season so far.

Wellington wore a one-off black third strip for the match for charity after calling upon their fans to 'black out' the Heart. Coach Ricki Herbert replaced Nick Ward with Leo Bertos and were given a huge confidence boost pre-game after Manny Muscat's eleventh-hour return to the side after spending the week in Melbourne for the expected birth of his child. They were otherwise unchanged from the eleven which picked up a 1-0 win in Newcastle a week earlier.

They were put on their way just two minutes into the match, star attacker Paul Ifill firing them ahead after Aziz Behich could only head Tony Lochhead's cross into Ifill's feet. It saw the Barbadan become Wellington's top scorer in what has been an injury-plagued campaign.

But despite the early lead the hosts couldn't capitalise on the impressive midfield performance of Alex Smith and more outstanding defensive shifts from Ben Sigmund and Andrew Durante in the first half, and entered the break level.

Jonatan Germano's through ball found Alex Terra in space, who beat the lunge of Durante and fired low past Phoenix stopper Mark Paston. It was the New Zealand goalkeeper's first conceded goal since returning to the side a fortnight ago on the Gold Coast.

But any fears from a strong and vocal Wellington crowd were put to bed by an



Phoenix's Paul Ifill slips the ball under Clint Bolton to open the scoring. Photo: PETER McDONALD

excellent second half performance. Leo Bertos especially shone before being substituted with what appeared to be a serious leg injury – back to his attacking best, taking on defenders with pace and trickery, culminating in his assist for Chris Greenacre's goal.

After 54 minutes Bertos danced past a hapless Behich and fired in a brilliant pinpoint delivery that the Englishman met expertly to head home between two defenders and Heart keeper Clint Bolton.

It was a lead the Phoenix deserved and was one that Heart simply could not recover from. Their misery was compounded ten minutes later as Ifill tucked home his second, latching onto Manny Muscat's pass and rounding Bolton, sending

the 13,000 strong crowd into raptures.

The hosts nearly added to their lead with a Daniel free-kick which cannoned back off the upright, only for Tim Brown's subsequent tap-in to be ruled offside.

The remaining half hour was little more than a formality for Wellington, the crowd enjoying a rampant final ten minutes in which Ifill aimed – not for the first time in his Phoenix career – to become the club's first hat-trick scorer.

Club owner Gareth Morgan – who will have been thrilled by the turnout after taking to Twitter midweek to urge supporters to show up – spent the final ten minutes among the Yellow Fever, even joining the supporters in waving his shirt around his head as the clock ticked

down.

And though the cries from the stands of 'we're going to win the league' may be a touch premature, there is little denying that a resurgent Phoenix deserve their lofty perch of second place after a month which has seen them pick up 12 of a possible 15 points.

The same period has seen Melbourne Heart pick up two mere points and has tumbled them back into a mid-table logjam. Though far from out of the title race, the Heart will now be looking over their shoulders towards the likes of Perth, Sydney, Newcastle as the race for the play-offs heats up.

They will also provide a handy lesson for Phoenix boss Ricki Herbert that they

simply must keep up their momentum, with away trips to Adelaide, Sydney and Central Coast looming.

But for the meantime at least, the Phoenix can dream. They are sitting prettier than they ever have at this stage of the competition, they have equalled the longest unbeaten record in their history and they have finally – albeit after a social networking push from boss Morgan – discovered their vociferous fan base.

A few months ago it might have been deemed impossible for the Phoenix to leapfrog champions Brisbane Roar, but that is exactly what they've done. They will now be thinking – and rightly too – that the sky is the limit.



Heart's Michael Marrone and Phoenix's Chris Greenacre go toe to toe. Photo: PETER McDONALD



Paul Ifill is on fire to notch his second goal of the afternoon. Photo: PETER McDONALD

BE A PART OF MELBOURNE'S HEART

Adelaide United



0

Perth Glory



3

Match Details

Adelaide United FC 0
Perth Glory 3 (Smeltz 15', McGarry 20', Miller 82')
Referee: Jarred Gillett
Crowd: 9,063 @ Hindmarsh Stadium

Adelaide United line-up: 1.Eugene Galekovic (gk) (c), 2.Osama Malik, 3.Nigel Boogaard, 5.Daniel Mullen, 7.Zenon Caravella (15.Jacob Melling 43'), 9.Sergio van Dijk, 10.Dario Vidosis (13.Ricardo Da Silva 82'), 11.Bruce Djite, 14.Cameron Watson (21.Francisco Usucar 74'), 17.Iain Ramsay, 18.Fabian Barbiero

Substitutes not used: 20.Mark Birighitti (gk)
Yellow Cards: Nil
Red Cards: Nil

Perth Glory line-up: 1.Danny Vukovic (Gk), 3.Bas Van Den Brink, 5.Steve Pantelidis, 7.Jacob Burns (c), 9.Shane Smeltz, 10.Liam Miller, 14.Steven McGarry (8.Adam Hughes 52'), 16.Evan Berger (27.Andrezinho 45+2'), 17.Todd Howarth, 19.Josh Risdon, 21.Mile Sterjovski (4.Billy Mehmet 84')

Substitutes not used: 30.Lewis Italiano (Gk)
Yellow Cards: Burns 41', Van Den Brink 55', Hughes 78', Vukovic 79', Pantelidis 90+1'
Red Cards: Nil

Glory make Reds rue missed chances

By Nic Kerber

Adelaide United FC was given a lesson on capitalising in front of goal as a wayward Reds went down 3-0 to Perth Glory at Hindmarsh Stadium. Despite creating 12 shots at goal, the majority of which came in a scintillating opening 15 minutes, compared to Perth's five for the match, the Reds could not hit the target and the in form Glory took full advantage as Shane Smeltz, Steven McGarry and Liam Miller all found the back of the net.

United Coach John Kosmina had stated in the lead up the importance of converting if the Reds were to be a chance of coming away with three points, but his words must not have resonated with his team as they failed to score for the first time since Kosmina took charge.

Kosmina admitted the result was a very significant one as he continues to learn about what this crop of Reds are made of and what needs to be done if the club are to stay in finals contention.

"It has told me a lot about what we've really got in terms of playing personnel but also what we've got in terms of character," Kosmina said.

"(I learnt that) we struggle when it gets a bit tough. Things don't go right for us and we drop our heads too easily, way too easily."

"In the first 15 minutes you won't see better football than that anywhere in the league at the moment – it was unbelievable. We could have been three goals up after 15 minutes, but you don't take your chances and look what happens."

"You go down the other end, you go to sleep, you make silly mistakes – school boy mistakes that shouldn't happen at this level."

The Reds coach also refuted any suggestions that a third game in eight days had caught up with his team.

"Look at the first 15 minutes – they didn't look tired then. They didn't look tired at the end of the game either, Perth looked more tired than us."

The Glory had three corners inside the opening two minutes but for the following 15 minutes it was all the home side as the Glory's goal resembled a shooting gallery.

First, strong work from Bruce Djite opened the door for Dario Vidosis, the Reds number 10 hammering the ball into the side netting.

Then in the 7th minute Djite missed a guilt-edged chance after Sergio van Dijk was in on goal, the Dutchman unselfishly laying it off for his strike partner but Djite cannoned



Glory Boys: Liam Miller and Shane Smeltz are jubilant after completing the smash and grab. Photo: ADAM BUTLER

his shot into the post with an open goal beckoning.

The Reds' interplay and movement in the front half was a sight to behold and the Glory were only holding on by the skin of their teeth. Van Dijk hit a long range shot from 22 metres that was kept out by Vukovic, with Djite skying the follow up, although the linesman had signalled offside.

Djite then rolled one inches wide of Vukovic's right post as the home side could and most probably should have been 3-nil.

But a horrible error from Daniel Mullen in the 15th minute proved costly for the Reds, the defender getting himself in a tangle and Smeltz and one of the league's most prolific goal scorers made him pay to stun the Hindmarsh crowd.

Five minutes later Perth went two up when McGarry knocked the ball in from close range after a corner, and when the Glory had a chance to reorganise their structure during the compulsory drinks break to combat United's early onslaught, it was going to be tough for the Reds to come back.

A set play from a Vidosis free kick almost unlocked the Glory defence when Nigel Boogaard and Osama Malik combined, Djite then sending a header a metre over the bar less than a minute later.

Zenon Caravella's afternoon came to an end in the 43rd minute when a recurring groin injury saw him replaced by Jacob Melling and in the 16 year olds time on the field, he showed that he has a big future in front of him.

Melling almost dragged a goal back when his committed run into the box was picked out by Vidosis but his left footed effort flew over the bar.

Time was running out for the Reds and their urgency lifted, Kosmina rallying his players on for a final surge in the last 20 minutes.

But Perth's defence scrambled well and proved impenetrable, and when Miller converted a fine individual effort to put Perth three goals up, the Reds' task of making finals with eight games to go became that bit harder.

Going into next Friday night's home game against second placed Wellington Phoenix, Kosmina knows the only result that will be acceptable.

"We've got to win at home. You can write this one off, we got a bad one out of our system," Kosmina said.

"It has been a hard week, we could have had nine points, we should have had nine points if you look at the way we played, and we got one, so we've got a bit of work to do and a bit of chasing to do and we've got to win next week."

"They (the players) are good enough to do it, they've just got to believe it. I certainly do but I don't know if they do and that gets back to this new culture change that was generated 12 months ago when the whole team was shifted out for no apparent reason."



Glory's Steve McGarry makes it 2-0 and the Reds are reeling. Photo: ADAM BUTLER



Liam Miller scores his first goal in the A-League and makes it 3-0 to the Glory. Photo: ADAM BUTLER

Melbourne Victory

1

Gold Coast United

1

Match Details

Melbourne Victory 1 (Kewell 66)
Gold Coast United 1 (Thwaite 90+3)
 At Aurora Stadium, Launceston, Tasmania
 HT: 0-0 Att: 5,268
 Referee: Matt Gillett

Gold Coast United: 40.Chris O'Connor [gk], 3.Michael Thwaite (c), 5.Kristian Rees (28.Daniel Bowles 76'), 13.Ante Rozic, 14.Ben Halloran, 15.Adama Traore, 16.Maceo Rigters, 18.James Brown (7.Golgol Mebrahtu 26'), 22.Peter Jungschlager, 23.Dylan McGowan (17.Chris Harold 69'), 24.Jonas Salley.
 Unused subs: 30.Brendan White [gk].

Yellow cards: Thwaite 60', Rees 64', Traore 78'.
 Red cards: None.

Melbourne Victory: 21.Ante Covic [gk], 3.Fabio, 5.Mark Milligan, 6.Leigh Broxham, 7.Matthew Kemp (4.Petar Franjic 74'), 8.Grant Brebner, 9.Jean Carlos Solorzano (18.Danny Allsopp 83'), 10.Archie Thompson, 11.Marco Rojas, 22.Harry Kewell, 23.Adrian Leijer (c).
 Unused subs: 1.Tando Velaphi [gk], 16.Carlos Hernandez.

Yellow cards: Leijer 73', Fabio 74'.
 Red cards: None.

Thwaite's late strike thwarts Victory

By Walter Pless

Melbourne Victory remain in 8th place and Gold Coast United in last spot after they drew 1-1 on Wednesday night at Aurora Stadium in Launceston in the first competitive A-League fixture played in Tasmania.

A goal by Harry Kewell midway through the second half gave Victory the lead, but Gold Coast United captain Michael Thwaite equalised in the 3rd minute of stoppage time to give the Queenslanders a valuable point.

The attendance of 5,268 was disappointing and less than officials had hoped for. The reasons given ranged from the fact that Tasmanians are considered parochial and southerners and those from the North-West Coast are reluctant, or unable to because of work commitments, to travel to Launceston for a match, especially in mid-week, to the fact that a live cricket match featuring some top Tasmanian players was being broadcast live on free-to-air television.

The positive spin is that the crowd was almost double what Gold Coast United could expect at their own home, a fact readily acknowledged by Gold Coast coach, Miron Bleiberg. And, it was, after all, a bottom-of-the-table clash, even though Harry Kewell was on view.

The first half proved goalless, but Victory had goalkeeper Ante Covic to thank for that, while the Gold Coast were left to cures poor finishing.

Covic was called upon to produce his best reflexes and to use his amazing agility to deny efforts by Maceo Rigters and Peter Jungschlager as Gold Coast came to within a whisker of scoring.

Victory's Archie Thompson had a shot from range that was feeble and wide of the target, while Kewell was denied by the woodwork and some nifty glove work by keeper Chris O'Connor after the Socceroo's header, following a throw-in, threatened to break the deadlock.

The half ended with Adama Traore shooting narrowly wide after a great build-up by Gold Coast, and O'Connor saving Gold

Melbourne Victory

Match Stats

GOLD COAST

5	Saves	8
9	Attempts on target	7
5	Attempts off target	7
48%	Possession	52%
5	Corners	4
2	Offsides	0
16	Fouls committed	18

Harry Kewell (right) takes on Dylan McGowan as Michael Thwaite covers. Photo: WALTER PLESS

Coast's bacon with a brilliant save from Jean Carlos Solorzano, who was set up by Kewell.

Two minutes after the resumption, Kewell went close after Thwaite had conceded a free-kick for a foul on Thompson. Marco Rojas tapped the free-kick short to Kewell, whose shot just cleared the bar.

In the 49th minute, Covic was at his brilliant best as he denied substitute Golgol Mebrahtu twice in a split second, but the Gold Coast player should really have given the keeper no chance from such close range.

In the 52nd minute, the excellent Rojas put Thompson clear on the right, but his chip landed harmlessly on the roof of the

net.

Two minutes later, Victory again got behind the Gold Coast defence on the right as Rojas fed Solorzano, but his crisp cross flew across the face of goal without anyone being able to get a touch.

In the 64th minute, Solorzano was put through the middle by a marvellous ball from midfield and he fought his way past Kristian Rees, only to shoot wide. But, referee Matt Gillett awarded a free-kick just outside the box after adjudging that Rees had fouled Solorzano.

It took over a minute for order to be restored and, when Rojas tapped the free-kick short to Kewell, the former Leeds United and Liverpool man smashed home

a low left-footer around the wall and just inside O'Connor's right-hand post to give Victory the lead.

Seven minutes from the end, Solorzano, who had been preferred in the starting line-up to Carlos Hernandez, found a way past a physical challenge from Ante Rozic, but he fired over the bar when he really should have tested the keeper.

Covic again showed his class in the 87th minute when he dived backwards and to his right and turned wide a fierce free-kick from Mebrahtu which was flying like an arrow into the far top corner of the net.

Victory were desperate to score a second goal to make the game safe and, in the first minute of stoppage time, Rojas

again released Thompson, who did the hard work in beating his marker, Daniel Bowles, but with the goal at his mercy, he incredibly shot wide.

Two minutes into stoppage time, Victory substitute Daniel Allsopp broke through but shot tamely, enabling O'Connor to make an easy save.

With seconds of the 4-minute period of stoppage time remaining, Gold Coast captain Thwaite embarked on a long forward run that his coach Miron Bleiberg later compared to those made famous by Franz Beckenbauer and beat Covic with a low drive to make it 1-1 and stun the Victory players and the crowd.



Melbourne Victory's Archie Thompson (right) turns past Gold Coast United's Ante Rozic. Photo: WALTER PLESS



Harry Kewell and match day mascots walk out onto the Aurora pitch. Photo: WALTER PLESS

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Friday 3rd February 2012

9



Adelaide Utd Line Up

1.Eugene Galekovic (gk) (c)

2.Osama Malik

3.Nigel Boogaard

6.Cassio

7.Zenon Caravella

8.Evgeniy LEVCHENKO

9.Sergio van Dijk

10.Dario Vidosic

11.Bruce Djite

13.Ricardo Da Silva

14.Cameron Watson

15.Jacob Melling

17.Iain Ramsay

18.Fabian Barbiero

21.Francisco Usucar

30.Paul Izzo (gk)

one to be omitted

In: Cassio (returns from injury), Paul Izzo (gk) (promoted), 8.Evgeniy LEVCHENKO (returns from injury)

Out: Antony Golec (Qantas Australian U23 duty), Daniel Mullen (Qantas Australian U23 duty), Mark Birighitti (gk) (Qantas Australian U23 duty)

Unavailable: Spase Dilevski (groin), Milan Susak (hamstring), Jon McKain (knee)

Adelaide Utd v Wellington Phoenix

Fri 3 Feb Hindmarsh Stadium 8pm



Odds:
AUFC 2.30
Draw 3.35
Phoenix 3.00

Honeymoon over for Kossie

HEAD-TO-HEAD:
All matches (played 15): Adelaide United wins 7, Wellington Phoenix wins 3 (5 draws)

By FFA

The honeymoon period is over for Kossie. Despite a dream start to his second stint as Reds boss, the novelty has worn off and he's back to the same old circus most managers deal with on a daily basis.

Their past five appearances have not yielded a single victory - indeed, their last match, a 3-0 loss at home to Perth Glory, was the most disappointing of the lot. Shane Smeltz, Steven McGarry and Liam Miller were on the spot to leave Adelaide's finals hopes teetering on the brink of oblivion.

Meanwhile, it's all coming up Milhouse for the second-placed Wellington Phoenix. Never has a New Zealand side sat so high on the Hyundai A-League table at this stage of the season.

Most had them down as certainties to miss the top six but as it stands, they're above - and in better form than - the once-invincible Brisbane Roar and the exuberant Melbourne Heart. What makes their most recent run even more impressive is that two of their wins came in Australia, which has never been a happy hunting ground for them.

There's still a few injury problems in Adelaide. Former captain Jon McKain (knee) is out for six weeks, Spase Dilevski (groin) for two and Milan Susak (hamstring) for one. Zenon Caravella and Evgieny Levchenko (both groin) must overcome fitness tests to take their place in United's squad.

Meanwhile, whether Wellington's Manny Muscat will play is again unclear. He's with his Melbourne-based wife, who is pregnant and due any day now, but whether he makes a quick dash to Hindmarsh remains to be seen.

Adelaide cannot afford to lose here, or else they could be locked in a battle for the wooden spoon with lowly Gold Coast. After the other United snatched a 1-1 draw in Tasmania with Melbourne Victory, their hopes of lifting themselves off the bottom of the ladder are feint, but they're still there.

Just around the corner is a trip to the Glitter Strip for the Reds, and if they drop points to the Phoenix that match could have a massive impact on which team is "awarded" the mythical wooden utensil at the end of the campaign. Adelaide will want to avoid that, and so a win over Wellington is crucial - but the

Kiss of Death
AUFC 1- 1 Phoenix



Phoenix Line Up

1. Mark Paston (GK)

2. Manny Muscat

3. Tony Lochhead

6. Tim Brown

7. Leo Bertos

8. Paul Ifill

9. Chris Greenacre

11. Daniel

15. Cameron Lindsay

17. Vince Lia

18. Ben Sigmund

19. Jimmy Downey

20. Tony Warner (GK)

21. Dani Sanchez

22. Andrew Durante (C)

24. Alex Smith

one to be omitted

In: Cameron Lindsay (promoted).

Out: Nil.

Unavailable: Lucas Pantelis (knee injury - indefinite). Nicky Ward (hamstring – two to three weeks).



Mariners Line Up

20. Justin Pasfield (Gk)

2. Daniel McBreen

3. Josh Rose

4. Pedj Bojic

5. Brad Porter

6. Patrick Zwaanswijk

8. Rostyn Griffiths

9. Bernie Ibini

10. Adriano Pellegrino

12. Troy Hearfield

13. Stuart Musialik

14. Michael McGlinchey

15. Brad McDonald

16. Trent Sainsbury

17. Tomas Rogic

18. Alex Wilkinson (C)

21. Sam Gallagher

23. Adam Kwasnik

31. Brody Crane (Gk)

four to be omitted

In: 5. Brad Porter, 10. Adriano Pellegrino, 13. Stuart Musialik, 15. Brad McDonald, 16. Trent Sainsbury, 17. Tomas Rogic, 21. Sam Gallagher (all promoted), 31. Brody Crane (short term contract)

Out: 1. Mathew Ryan (Gk) (Qantas Australian U23 duty), 11. Oliver Bozanic (Qantas Australian U23 duty), 22. Mustafa Amini (Qantas Australian U23 duty)

Unavailable: 7. John Hutchinson (suspended - 1 week)

CC Mariners v Brisbane Roar

Sat 4 Feb Bluetongue Stadium 5:30pm



Odds:
Mariners 2.20
Draw 3.35
Roar 3.20

Another epic on the cards

HEAD-TO-HEAD: All matches (played 25): Central Coast Mariners wins 4, Brisbane Roar wins 12 (9 draws)

By Adrian Deans

There have been a few epic encounters between these two over the last couple of years.

The Mariners and Brisbane have been, by far, the two stand-out performers in recent times and when they play each other they tend to serve up something special – including that unforgettable Grand Final last year. Brilliant for Brisbane – heart rending for the Central Coast. I can still remember the feeling of despair when that injury time equaliser flew in – and the numb, bitter certainty that the Mariners would lose the penalty shoot out.

I got that right.

So now, every time the Mariners play Brisbane it is a chance for revenge – to chip away another small piece of the stone that lodged in our collective breast when Victory was so cruelly torn from us in the game that matters most.

This game also matters, although possibly more for Brisbane – which is why I believe an upset is on the cards.

The Mariners haven't been playing that well. They came from behind to beat Adelaide last time out, but I think Adelaide would have won that game if they hadn't inexplicably dropped back in the second half and allowed the Mariners to take control. Ever since the Gold Coast showed a few matches back that the Mariners attacking channels can be closed by pressing hard on Rose and Bojic, the Mariners have struggled to run their usual patterns resulting in time and space up the park for Zwaanswijk, Amini and McGlinchey.

And it's those players that play the killer balls to put the Mariners in behind for those hard low crosses from which they score so many of their goals.

Ange Postecoglou won't be sitting back. You could put your house on the fact that the Brisbane wide men will be in the faces of Rose and Bojic and Besart Berisha will be terrorising Wilkinson and Zwaanswijk into rushed balls that might have been chased down in the past by Matt Simon, but will not be enjoyed by the likes of Bernie Ibini and Daniel McBreen.

Amini could be kept out of the game altogether as he watches long balls clear the midfield, obliging him to try and win possession up the field. That's not his game.

Having said all that, the Mariners have found ways to stay in the game (and even win the game) when not dominating possession in the last few weeks, so no matter how well Brisbane blunt their attack, they will still be hard to beat.

Mitch Nichols is due for a big game and Bahraini Mohamed Adnan has been getting increasingly influential. Thomas Broich will be better for the run and will be happier back in his usual position after being employed higher up the park in Berisha's enforced absence.

I anticipate a busy afternoon for Mat Ryan.

Adrian Deans is the author of Mr Cleansheets – published by Vulgar Press, distributed by Dennis Jones and Associates and available in all good book stores. Also available as ebook at www.mrcleansheets.com

Kiss of Death
Roar 2-1 Mariners



Roar Line Up

1. Michael Theoklitos (GK)

2. Matt Smith

3. Shane Stefanutto (C)

5. Ivan Franjic

6. Erik Paaratlu

7. Besart Berisha

8. Massimo Murodcca

9. Kofi Danning

10. Henrique

11. Issey Nakajima-Farran

16. Mohamed Adnan

18. Luke Brattan

20. Andrew Redmayne (GK)

21. James Meyer

22. Thomas Broich

24. Nick Fitzgerald.

one to be omitted

In: 7. Besart Berisha (returns from suspension), 11. Issey Nakajima-Farran (promoted)

Out: 14. Rocky Visconte (Qantas Australian U23 duty), 4. Matt Jurman (Qantas Australian U23 duty), 17. Mitch Nichols (Qantas Australian U23 duty)

Unavailable: 19. Jack Hingert (ankle injury - 1 week)



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Friday 3rd February 2012



Heart Line Up

1.Clint Bolton (GK)
2.Michael Marrone
3.Brendan Hamill
4.Simon Colosimo
7.Rutger Worm
8.Kristian Sarkies
9.Maycon
10.Wayne Srhoj
11.Alex Terra
13.Jonatan Germano
15.David Williams
18.Curtis Good
19.Eli Babalj
26.Paul Reid
27.Craig Goodwin
30.Sebastian Mattei (GK)
one to be omitted

In: Wayne Srhoj, Paul Reid, Craig Goodwin, Maycon (all promoted)

Out: Matt Thompson (knee – 4 weeks), 16.Aziz Behich (Qantas Australian U23 duty), 17.Jason Hoffman (Qantas Australian U23 duty), 23.Mate Dugandzic (Qantas Australian U23 duty)

Unavailable: Fred (groin – 2 weeks), Nick Kalmar (back – 2 weeks), Kliment Taseski (foot – 1 week)

Melbourne Heart v Melbourne Victory

Sat 4 Feb AAMI Park 7:45pm

By John Clark

The third and final instalment of the Melbourne Derby hits AAMI Park this weekend and what a massive week of news it has been for both these sides.

The Heart were hit by the news that coach John Van't Schip will not be coaching the side beyond this season, as he returns home to Holland for family reasons. Van't Schip will not be an easy man to replace having instilled a culture, game plan and belief that has the Heart on a short track to success. He will however remain in charge for the rest of the season and would love to sign off with a successful finals campaign.

For the Victory it was another week of what could have been having thrown away match winning leads twice inside six days. Against Sydney on Australia Day the Victory took somewhat over an undeserved 2-0 lead into the half thanks to goals Isaka Cernak and Fabio. Archie Thompson had a great chance to put the game to bed, when he was in on goal, but Liam Reddy kept the Sky Blues in the contest and not long after they dragged a goal back after Ante Covic uncharacteristically mis-handled in the area and Cazarine was able to tap in.

The Victory began to sit deeper inviting Sydney to control the game and predictably in injury time they equal-



Season hangs in the balance

Odds:
Heart 2.44
Draw 3.40
Victory 2.80

HEAD-TO-HEAD:
All matches (played 5): Melbourne Heart wins 2, Melbourne Victory wins 1 (2 draws)

ised. A week later, in Launceston, the Victory lead for the 12th time this season and once again Archie Thompson had a chance to kill the game when 1 on 1 with the keeper. He dragged his shot wide and minute's later ex-Victory defender Michael Thwaite scored his first ever professional goal to crush Victory spirits.

The Heart will be hoping to pile more misery on a performance that Harry Kewell described as 'disgusting'. The home side though will be severely hamstrung having lost Aziz Behich, Mate Dugandzic and Jason Hoffman to Olyroo duty.

They will also be without Captain Fred, as well as his replacement Matt Thompson who scored twice when these sides met back in December.

The Victory are not without their own personnel problems having lost Matt Foschini, Diogo Ferreira and Isaka Cernak to Olyroo duties, while Adrian Leijer will have to be closely monitored after struggling against the Gold Coast with a shoulder complaint.

While much has been made of the Victory's inability to garner three points, they have managed to win a game this calendar year, something their cross town rivals haven't man-

aged to achieve. The Heart are six games without a win, after coming off a five game winning streak that included a 3-2 derby win over the Victory.

The Heart's pre-Christmas form means that they remain in the top 6 and can spring board back into 3rd with a win on Saturday night. With the form of both these sides it's very hard to see either taking the three points, but the Heart just seems too depleted to come away with anything here.

**Kiss of Death
Heart 1-2 Victory**



Victory Line Up

1.Tando Velaphi (gk)
3. Fabio
4. Petar Franjic
5.Mark Milligan
6. Leigh Broxham
7. Matthew Kemp
8. Grant Brebner
9. Jean Carlos Solorzano
10. Archie Thompson
11. Marco Rojas
12. Rodrigo Vargas
16.Carlos Hernandez
17.Jimmy Jeggo
18. Danny Allsopp
21. Ante Covic (GK)
22. Harry Kewell
23. Adrian Leijer (c)
one to be omitted

In: 12. Rodrigo Vargas (promoted), 17.Jimmy Jeggo (promoted)

Out: Nil

Unavailable: 14. Billy Celeski (groin), 15. Tom Pondeljak (back), 20. Lawrence Thomas (GK) (omitted) 13. Diogo Ferreira (Qantas Australian U23 duty), 2. Matthew Foschini (Qantas Australian U23 duty), 19. Isaka Cernak (Qantas Australian U23 duty)



SYDNEY FC

Sydney FC Line Up

1. Liam Reddy
3. Jamie Coyne
4. Pascal Bosschaert
5. Michael Beauchamp
6. Hirofumi Moriyasu
7. Brett Emerton
8. Karol Kisel
9. Bruno Cazarine
10. Nick Carle
15. Terry McFlynn (c)
16. Joel Chianese
19. Mark Bridge
20. Ivan Necevski
21. Scott Jamieson
22. Nathan Sherlock
23. Rhyann Grant
24. Mitch Mallia
two to be omitted

In: Joel Chianese (promoted), Mitch Mallia (promoted), Jamie Coyne (promoted), Nathan Sherlock (promoted)
Out: Dimi Petratos (Qantas Australian U23 duty), Sebastian Ryall (Qantas Australian U23 duty)

Unavailable: Shannon Cole (hip, 1 week), Terry Antonis (hamstring, 4 weeks)

Sydney FC v Newcastle Jets

Sun 5 Feb Sydney Football Stdm 5pm

By FFA

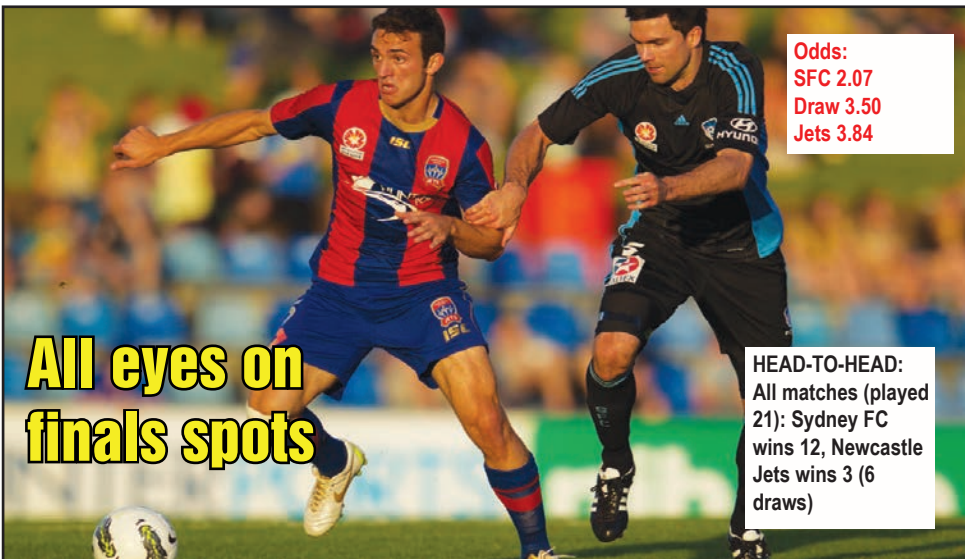
Sydney easily have the wood over the Jets in the history of the Hyundai A-League with the Novocastrians winning just three of the 21 meetings between the two clubs, the last of those way back in November 2009.

The Sky Blues have taken all three points on 12 of those occasions including when they last met at Ausgrid Stadium towards the end of 2011. Despite going behind to a Jeremy Brockie volley in the first half, Sydney hit back with second half goals to Bruno Cazarine and Juho Makela to claim a vital victory.

Sydney look to have put their six-game winless run behind them, picking up four points in their last two matches, but it might be just a bit premature to say they are back to their promising early season form.

One thing is for sure though...the Sky Blues definitely possess the right character, coming from a goal down to beat the Gold Coast a fortnight ago before coming from two down to snatch a draw with Melbourne Victory on Australia Day. If they can sort out their starts, the wins should continue to flow.

Just how do you predict what the Jets are going to do from week to week? So lacklustre and unimaginative in their last few games, Gary



All eyes on finals spots

Odds:
SFC 2.07
Draw 3.50
Jets 3.84

HEAD-TO-HEAD:
All matches (played 21): Sydney FC wins 12, Newcastle Jets wins 3 (6 draws)

van Egmond's side pulled off one of the shocks of the season in beating Brisbane at Suncorp Stadium last weekend.

It's a result that has Newcastle right back in top six calculations and if they can get a rare win over Sydney here, they will leapfrog their opponents into the top six. No more incentive needed for the Jets to perform again.

You could forgive Newcastle Jets fans – and some players even – for feeling a bit uneasy heading into this match. Although they are coming off a huge road win over champions Brisbane, the Jets face a side who are starting to get back to form and one they haven't

beaten in more than two years.

Still, heading into this weekend this encounter brings together the sixth-placed Sky Blues and the seventh-placed Jets. Van Egmond's side will have no greater incentive to end their woeful record against Sydney than a place in the playoff spots come then end of the round.

Sydney have had a ten-day break since their last match so should come into this match feeling refreshed and confident after a good recent spell.

Much could depend on whether marquee man Brett Emerton can shrug off his hamstring strain. Already with-

out four of their young stars through international duty and injury, the Sky Blues can ill-afford to be without the Socceroos winger as well.

While the Jets' problem continues to be their inability to score goals, they have started to shore things up again at the back in recent weeks which means this will be a tight encounter. There's likely only going to be one goal in it and despite Sydney's poor home record and without a few players, it should be the Sky Blues that edge this one.

**Kiss of Death
SFC 2-1 Jets**



Jets Line Up

1. Ben Kennedy (gk)
2. Taylor Regan
4. Nikolai Topor-Stanley
5. Tiago Calvano
8. Jeremy Brockie
9. Michael Bridges
10. Ruben Zadkovich
11. Tarek Elrich
12. Jobe Wheelhouse (c)
13. Byun
14. Labinot Haliti
17. James Virgili
18. Marko Jasic
19. Matthew Nash (gk)
22. Ali Abbas
23. Ryan Griffiths
24. Francis Jeffers
25. Jacob Pepper
three to be omitted

In: 14. Labinot Haliti, 17. James Virgili, 18. Marko Jasic, 22. Ali Abbas (all promoted).

Out: 12.Ben Kantarovski (Qantas Australian U23 duty)
Unavailable: Nil

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Glory Line Up

1.Danny Vukovic (Gk)
3.Bas Van Den Brink
4.Billy Mehmet
5.Steve Pantelidis
7.Jacob Burns (C)
8.Adam Hughes
9.Shane Smeltz
10.Liam Miller
13.Travis Dodd
14.Steven McGarry
15.Tommy Amphlett
17.Todd Howarth
18.Jesse Makarounas
19.Josh Risdon
21.Mile Sterjovski
27.Andrezinho
30.Lewis Italiano (Gk)
35.Dean Heffernan
three to be omitted

In: 15.Tommy Amphlett (Promoted),
13.Travis Dodd (Returns From Injury),
18.Jesse Makarounas (Promoted),
35.Dean Heffernan (Promoted)
Out: 16.Evan Berger (Hamstring)

Unavailable: 2.Josh Mitchell (Knee),
6.Chris Coyne (Achilles),
11.Victor Sikora (Hip - Long Term Injury List),
12.Scott Neville (Knee),
(Abdominal Strain) 16.Evan Berger (Hamstring),
22.Adam Taggart (U-23 Selection)

Perth Glory v Gold Coast United

Mon 6 Feb nib Stadium 10:00pm

By Ashley Morrison

Miron Bleiberg will undoubtedly underplay the Gold Coast's chances of victory as they head to Perth for their round 20 clash. After all the last time the two sides met Ian Ferguson and the Perth Glory recorded their first victory over the Gold Coast and won the Iron Ore Cup – which feels like its made of tin.

Still it gave Ian Ferguson and Tony Sage the chance to pose on the pitch with a piece of silverware, which no one at Perth Glory has been able to do for many a year.

The Glory are undoubtedly in a rich vein of form unbeaten in seven games for the first time since the inception of the A league, but this game could be a banana-skin game for them.

Gold Coast will come to Perth praising the Glory, the public is actually beginning to cock an ear of interest to the goings on at NIB Stadium and there is buoyed expectation amongst the fans. When a side in form comes up against the bottom side that expectation rises, hence it is a very risky game for Perth Glory.

HEAD-TO-HEAD: All matches (played 7):
Perth Glory wins 1,
Gold Coast United wins 4 (2 draws)

Odds:
Glory 1.79
Draw 3.55
GCU 4.75



Glory's golden challenge

The loss of Evan Berger to a hamstring injury is disappointing, but Andrezinho is an able replacement. The loss of Steve McGarry is a far greater blow to the side. Perth Glory have not lost a game since he became a regular in the starting eleven, and his combination with Miller and Burns has been the fulcrum on which Perth Glory's recent success has been built. In addition he has also managed to bang in three goals.

Glory look resolute at the back

and will be hard to break down, while Gold Coast will not make the naïve mistakes that they made in round nine gifting Perth Glory two penalties.

In addition the postponement of their game against the Mariners could work to their advantage with two games in quick succession having played Victory on Wednesday. Although having had the game in Tasmania will make the trip a few hours longer. However the late equalizer will have given

them hope that they could snatch a at least a point in Perth.

If Glory score first don't bank on them throwing away three points. This game will be a tight affair. If Glory score first will Gold Coast show the same spirit they did against Melbourne Victory, and will it be enough? Perth Glory would have to be favourites, but Football can be a funny old game!

**Kiss of Death
Glory 2-1 Gold Coast**



Gold Coast Line Up

40.Chris O'Connor (gk)
2.Josh Brillante
3.Michael Thwaite (c)
5.Kristian Rees
7.Golgol Mebrahtu
13.Ante Rozic
14.Ben Halloran
15.Adama Traore
16.Maceo Rigters
17.Chris Harold
18.James Brown
22.Peter Jungschlager
23.Dylan McGowan
24.Jonas Salley
28.Daniel Bowles
29.Mitch Bevan
30.Brendan White (gk)
two to be omitted

In: 2.Josh Brillante (promoted),
29.Mitch Bevan (returns from quad injury)
Out: Nil

Unavailable: 1.Glen Moss (groin injury - 5 weeks),
6.Paul Beekmans (compassionate leave - indefinite),
9.Joel Porter (calf - 4 weeks),
10.Tahj Minniecon (foot injury - 2 weeks),
12.Dylan Macallister (hamstring - 6 weeks),
19.Chris Broadfoot (ankle injury - indefinite)



Rewind



Robert Di Fabio

Is Wellington Phoenix the real deal?

After commencing the season in underwhelming fashion – uncharacteristically struggling on home soil, dwindling near the foot of the table – the Phoenix have hit a striking vein of form, claiming 15 points from its last seven outings, and notably on a three-game winning streak – including two 1-0 triumphs over Gold Coast and Newcastle across the Tasman.

Last week's commanding 3-1 victory over Melbourne Heart illustrated its credentials in this season's A-League title race – supplanting Brisbane Roar into second position on the table. There's no doubt that, when on song this team is capable of causing a few headaches for their opposition, particularly when it plays host at Westpac Stadium – Wellington's fortress "the Caketin", in tandem with Perth Glory's nib Stadium are considered as arguably the most difficult places to travel, given their outlying locations.

With a crop of rivals breathing down the Phoenix's neck, amid a mere six points separating second from sixth on the table, a top-two finish appears to be imperative to the club's title aspirations. If the Nix could secure a double-chance come the A-League finals series, then it would certainly be optimistic of reaching its first

finale, after astonishingly falling short at the last hurdle in 2009-10 campaign – controversially losing to Sydney FC in the preliminary final, when the Sky Blues took advantage of a refereeing blunder which saw the two-time A-League champions score the winning goal from a handball.

The Phoenix's primary objective will be to finish in the top-four, in order to secure a home final, although anything is possible with eight games remaining. Talismanic striker Paul Iffill holds the key to the Kiwi's success. If the English-born Barbados international can continue his goalscoring touch, then the reverie of a Grand Final berth could well come into fruition.

Melbourne derby offers opportunity for redemption:

The derby couldn't have come at a better time for Heart and Victory, both of whom are encompassing a lean patch of form, symbolising outfits anchored near the bottom of the ladder – in the latter's case, it is apparent.

The red and whites definitely appear to be a shadow of their former self, winless in its last six matches, only accumulating a meagre two points in the process. John van't Schip's troops aren't illustrating the type of form which had his side described as a threat for the season's championship. Before Heart's tenuous run of form, it was playing an awe-inspiring brand of football which saw it take the league by storm.

In December, Heart triumphed in all five of its A-League fixtures, handed a pre-Christmas bequest, prevailing over cross-town rival Victory 3-2 in an entertaining affair and importantly, the evening was a fantastic endorsement for the competition.



Could the unthinkable happen and the coveted 'Toilet Seat' makes its way over the pond?
Photo: PETER McDONALD

Reaching the dizzy heights of second on the table, it has faltered dramatically in the New Year, yet to win a solitary game, searching for answers in the absence of midfield orchestrator and club captain Fred.

With an arduous assignment forthcoming to finish in the top-six, the task won't get any easier with Mate Dugandzic, Aziz Behich and Jason Hoffman selected for the upcoming Olympic qualifiers, ruling them out of Heart's approaching fixtures.

The club's stocks will be wholeheartedly tested, as van't Schip searches for solutions, with the Dutchman eyeing a play-off spot for the first time in the club's short history.

Meanwhile, Victory's season is slowly fading into the wilderness, surrendering an advantage on Australia Day against fierce rival Sydney FC, to ultimately finish with another frustrating result. Victory boss Jim Magilton has reason to feel aggrieved, after his side yielded a two-goal

cushion at the interval.

If that wasn't a bitter pill to swallow, the navy blues had a sense of déjà vu against Gold Coast United in Wednesday night's community game in Launceston. Socceroos star Harry Kewell put Victory ahead through a scintillating free kick midway through the second period, before a late sucker punch strike from Gold Coast captain Michael Thwaite – the 28-year-olds first goal in a 10-year professional career – secured a share of the spoils in

stoppage time.

Remarkably, it was the eighth time in 19 games this campaign that Victory had relinquished a lead, to unsuccessfully come away with the three points. For an onlooker's perspective, it appears that this trend is having a psychological effect on the players – unable to demonstrate the character or temperament to hold on to leads, or scrap their way to "ugly" victories.

It's certainly an issue which needs addressing – an area where Victory has truly let themselves down – and we cannot help but think the absence of former captain and inspirational leader Kevin Muscat is a void yet to be replaced. His predecessor, Adrian Leijer, 25, is perceived as a long-term replacement. Despite a lapse in form recently, the ex-Fulham defender acquires the passion, personality, and media nous to be a success. Leijer, in conjunction with his senior counterparts – Archie Thompson, Kewell, Carlos Hernandez and Ante Covic – need to hit full throttle if this Victory unit is to achieve any of its goals this term.

In spite of Heart and Victory's current rut, the third and final derby is anticipated to be a full-house with an electric atmosphere. The enmity is growing between these two modern rivals, with the losing side potentially having enormous ramifications. The scene is set for an enthralling contest, with drama-filled action engulfed throughout the 90-minute tussle.

Follow Robert on Twitter @RobertDi-Fabio

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Victory learning the Davies way



MACKENZIE AT LARGE
With Craig MacKenzie

DARREN Davies held his nerve. Nine games straight and no points to show for it would have broken a lesser man but not this 33-year-old Welshman.

This was Davies' baptism of fire as new head coach of Melbourne Victory's youth team. It was just before Christmas and the seniors were struggling while the youth team was anchoring the foot of the table. Needless to say the natives were restless.

"You can understand the thousands upon thousands of Victory fans looking at our results and looking at the table and drawing the obvious conclusion," said Davies.

"The easiest thing to do would have been to abandon our passing game, not to play it out from the back but to go long instead and not to play the younger players.

"But what would that have achieved? Sure, we might have ended up half-way up the table but at the expense of a playing philosophy and a development program that this football club believes in."

But the former Tottenham pro, assistants Vaughan Coveny and goal-keeping coach Dean Anastasiadis stuck to their guns and have been rewarded with three wins and a draw from the team's last five outings, the latest success coming last weekend when fourth-placed Sydney was rolled 2-1.

"It's the way we played to get our recent results that is the most pleasing aspect for me," said Davies.

"From my own perspective it was difficult at first. I only arrived here (from Queensland) 10 days before the start of the season and we were thrown in at the deep end really with virtually no preparation.

"We have changed the culture both on and off the park and to their credit the boys have bought into our philosophy and have worked unbelievably hard. We only gave them two or three days off over the Christmas period."

But it's little surprise that Davies has instituted the same work ethic that was drummed into him at a young age.

Born in the south Welsh town of Port Talbot, he started playing foot-

ball when he was five years old with local club Afan Lido.

When he was 14 he captained the Welsh schoolboys, an unusual honour given that he was one of the youngest players in the squad. In all he had two seasons of schoolboy football and made around 30 appearances for the national side. His growing reputation had attracted the attention of major clubs but it was Tottenham Hotspur that gazumped their rivals by signing Davies to a two-year schoolboy deal when he was 14. One year on and the youngster left home to live in digs in London while pursuing his football dream.

As a 16 and 17 year-old Davies was apprenticed at Spurs and when he came out of his time he signed a two and half year pro contract with the London giant. But it was to be the one and only full-time deal he penned there.

"It was a fantastic experience, it really was. You're training with World Cup winners day in, day out. You're training with guys like Klinsman, Ginola and on the management side of things there was Ossie Ardiles, Gerry Francis. It was a great club to be at.

"And the thing about Tottenham was that it was renowned for playing a passing game. That's where I first bought into this philosophy and it ended up setting me up for my coaching career."

When Davies left Spurs he joined Welsh side Barry Town, at that time preparing for a Champions League qualifier with Ukraine powerhouse Dinamo Kiev.

"It was a big disappointment for me not to break into the first team at Tottenham but the move back to Wales was ideal for me. It was great to be back home among friends and I got my confidence back, which was very important."

It didn't take too long though before Davies was on the move once more and for the next few years of his career he became something of a journeyman, plying his trade in Scotland, England and Wales.

In all, the UK part of his playing CV lists Afan Lido, Tottenham, Barry Town, Morton, Stirling Albion, Dover Athletic, Forest Green Rovers,



Darren Davies (right) and Vaughan Coveny in national youth league matchday mode. Inset: Darren Davies

Tiverton Town, Merthyr Tydfil and Port Talbot Town.

He started gaining coaching badges when he was 28 and his first big coaching job was as academy director at Port Talbot Town.

Then came a call from Chris Bale, a pal playing with Queensland outfit Redlands City Devils, asking him if he was interested in playing in Australia.

"After the freezing cold in Scotland and Wales it wasn't too hard to say yes."

"It was a fantastic experience, it really was. You're training with World Cup winners day in, day out. You're training with guys like Klinsman, Ginola and on the management side of things there was Ossie Ardiles, Gerry Francis. It was a great club to be at."

Davies arrived here for the 2009 season as a 30-year-old and although it was to turn out to be his last as a player he ended that part of his football career in style, opening the scoring in Redlands stunning 4-1 blitz of raging hot favourite Brisbane Strikers in the Queensland

State League Grand Final.

During his time in Queensland he did more coaching courses and was thrilled when he successfully applied for the position of head coach of the Queensland Academy of Sport.

"It meant the finish of my playing career but it was a great job for me," said Davies.

Around 18 months ago Davies returned to the UK where he was assessed for and granted his UEFA A licence.

It's a fair feather in his cap given that such coaching accreditation is not commonplace in Australia.

And his stint at the QAS proved to be a handy stepping stone after he was appointed to his current position with Victory last September.

At the time he said he would "hopefully produce the next generation of Melbourne Victory first team players."

So how much progress does he think he has made towards achieving that lofty ambition?

"It's too early to tell right now. This is a long-term project but I can tell you that I've seen a lot of improvement since I've come here.

"Even if we kept the same squad for the following season we'd have a very, very young team. The only squad younger than ours now is the AIS squad.

"We've got boys playing against op-

ponents who are years older than them and it is a real test for our lads both physically and mentally.

"But we keep taking the long-term view because we believe in the benefits that this will bring.

"We want to set up a program that is as professional as it can be and we want to set it up for the off-season as well so that when the next group (of players) comes along they will know what to expect if they progress to national youth league level.

"We want to set up a program below that youth level and I really believe that this is very important."

Vidmar, De Roo nab top jobs
OKAY, let's join in the rush to publish so-called exclusives albeit that I have been unable to verify these stories in their entirety as we went to press.

Late last year I wrote a column headed "Dutch marriage on the rocks" and in that column I named the four candidates for the dual roles of head coach of the AIS and Joeys coach.

Well, how wrong can a man be? It seems that the Dutch influence in Australian football remains as entrenched as ever given that I'm told that Queensland technical director Peter De Roo has been anointed and appointed by his former coach, FFA technical director Han Berger,

to the new post of AIS technical director.

On top of that I understand that former Socceroo Tony Vidmar has been appointed to the AIS/Joeys gig.

I have no problem with Vidmar's appointment other than to call the process into question.

I understand that the four candidates in the frame pre-Christmas – Paul Foster, Joe Mullen, Wayne O'Sullivan and Phil Stubbins – believed that they were the only candidates for the position.

Wonder what they are feeling right now?

De Roo was named in a FourFourTwo exclusive earlier this week as the new Joeys coach but I'm starting to think that he may end up with the Young Socceroos gig instead.

That is, unless Berger and FFA have decided that we'll have an AIS technical director who will oversee both the Joeys and Young Socceroos coaches.

I can tell you this much. The lucky candidate for the Young Socceroos gig will inherit one of the most talented groups that we've had in a while and from this point forward there should be no excuses. Stuff this gig up and you and the people who appointed you should suffer the fate that such levels of incompetence regularly attract in most industries.

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Middle Row: Jonatan Germano, Brendan Hamill, Curtis Good, Nick Kalmar, Nikola Roganovic, Clint Bolton, Eli Babalj, Jason Hoffman, Maycon, Wayne Srhoj.
Front Row: David Williams, Fred, Simon Colosimo, John Aloisi (Assistant/ Youth Coach), John van't Schip (Head Coach), Ante Milcic (Assistant Coach), Peter Zeis (Goalkeeping Coach), Matt Thompson, Alex Terra, Aziz Behich.

MELBOURNE VICTORY



PHOTO: MELBOURNE VICTORY FC / GETTY IMAGES

Back Row: Nick Ansell, Leigh Broxham, Petar Franjic, Jean Carlos Solorzano, Diogo Ferreira, Fabio, Luke O'Dea.

Middle Row: James Jeggo, Isaka Cernak, Danny Allsopp, Tando Velaphi, Lawrence Thomas, Rodrigo Vargas, Grant Brebner, Matthew Kemp.

Front Row: Tommy Pondeljak, Matthew Foschini, Carlos Hernandez, Harry Kewell, Mehmet Durakovic (Head Coach), Adrian Leijer, Archie Thompson, Billy Celeski, Marco Rojas.

CANBERRA UNITED

PHOTO: NICK GUOTH



WESTFIELD W-LEAGUE 2012 CHAMPIONS



Victory hold on for second NYL win



Damir Lokvancic (Victory) fights to keep possession against Mitchell Malia (Sydney)Photo: JOHN PUNSHON



Tom Mijic (Sydney) was sent off for this tackle on Luke O'Dea (Victory). Photo: JOHN PUNSHON

By Daniel Quinn

Victory hold on for second NYL win
Melbourne Victory have held onto a lead to defeat Sydney FC 2-1 at Kingston Heath Soccer Complex on a hot Sunday afternoon.

Sydney started well with the majority of possession and had the first chance on 5 minutes. Dado Lokvancic took down Mitch Mallia inside the box and a penalty was awarded. Tando Velaphi however saved Jared Lum's penalty before Velaphi got back up to save Blake Powell's follow up effort.

On 10 minutes Velaphi went from hero to villain when he took one too many touches before Mallia snatched it off the goalkeeper. Mallia then slotted the ball into an open net.

Less than ten minutes later Luke O'Dea equalised for the hosts. Lokvancic's free-kick was flicked in by the Young Socceroos forward and past the oncoming Ryan Norval in goals.

On 27 minutes O'Dea scored his second and extended the lead for the hosts. Herman Espindola cut in from the left before passing into O'Dea who touched and finished nicely

past Norval.

Melbourne Victory coach Darren Davies thought he wasn't his side's best performance but was happy to get the win. "Like we have said all season it's not just the win it's the matter of the win as well. I don't actually think we played as well as we have played in some of the other games but I think the win was in the right vein. After we made some early adjustments we created some chances and played some good Football."

Ten-man Gold Coast hold Heart

Ten-men Gold Coast United have held Melbourne Heart to a 2-2 draw at John Cain Memorial Park on Saturday afternoon.

Melbourne Heart started on the front foot with Craig Goodwin pushing on the left and he beat two defenders before finishing powerfully past Jerrad Tyson.

On 21 minutes Gold Coast equalised thanks to Daniel Severino who was played in by a nice flick by Chris Lucas before the overage player finished with his right foot.

Five minutes later Goodwin put in a brilliant cross onto the plate for Adrian Zahra who poked home to take the lead. However the ball

went through the net and after discussion with his Assistant Brenton Hayward correctly gave the goal.

Six minutes before half-time Lucas was sent off for a two footed, late challenge on Groenewald.

Ten minutes into the second-half Kristian Konstantinidis fouled Barker-Daish and a penalty was awarded. The Melbourne born Gold Coast-er stepped up but Roganovic saved brilliantly.

On 77 minutes Bobby Russell equalised for the visitors from a defensive mistake. Konstantinidis poked the ball directly out to Russell after a cross from the right. Russell then comfortably finished.

Heart couldn't find a winner and neither could Gold Coast but the visitors would feel the better of the two sides.

Central Coast fire is second-half

Central Coast Mariners have defeated the AIS 4-0 at AIS Athletics Track on Saturday thanks to four goals in the second-half.

The encounter for the AIS didn't start too well when Jack Green broke his leg on 12 minutes. Mariner's best chance of the half came thanks to a long ball from Nicholas Litter's to Mitchell

Duke but Jordan Thurtell saved comfortably in goals for the AIS.

Five minutes into the second stanza Justin Hayward opened the scoring. The midfielder ran onto the end of Duke's header before finishing past Thurtell.

Ten minutes later Duke doubled the lead when he snatched the ball of Jakob Williams before finishing nicely.

Jordan Farina made it 3-0 soon later when the unmarked forward headed in.

Littler finished it off for the visitors on 82 minutes when he rose at Nikola Stanojevic's corner to head home.

Reds peg back Glory for stalemate

Adelaide United have come back from a goal down on two occasions to take a point at 6PR Stadium on Saturday in the 2-2 draw with Perth Glory.

Glory had a huge chance on 8 minutes from the penalty spot after Jordan Elsey fouled Jesse Makarounas in the box. But Makarounas' penalty was saved fantastically by Paul Izzo. Only five minute later Perth did have that first goal as Harry O'Brien poked home from outside the box.

9 minutes before the break Elsey made up for the penalty with an equaliser. Evan Kostopoulos' initial shot was saved before Elsey followed up with the equaliser.

But 60 seconds later Brandon O'Neill played in Makarounas who made no mistake to take the lead back.

Five minutes into the second-half Kostopoulos equalised again for the Reds after linking up with Kamara.

Glory finished with ten men as Clayton Arnez was sent off for a late tackle on Awer Mabil.

Roar and Jets play out entertaining draw

Brisbane Roar and Newcastle Jets have played out an entertaining 1-1 draw at Queensland Sport and Athletic Centre on Sunday.

On 16 minutes James Virgili opened the scoring after beating Roar gloveman Andrew Redmayne and finishing from an acute angle.

Only two minutes later Labinot Haliti should have doubled the score but hit the post.

But on 27 minutes Lambadaridis caused more damage setting up Tomislav Cirjak who finished from close range.

Just after half-time, half-time substitute Corey

Results
AIS 0-4 CC Mariners
Melbourne Heart 2-2 Gold Coast United
Perth Glory 2-2 Adelaide United
Brisbane Roar 1-1 Newcastle Jets
Melbourne Victory 2-1 Sydney FC

NYL Standings	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	P
1 CC Mariners	139	14	33	13	20	28		
2 Perth Glory	13	7	5	1	30	22	8	26
3 Brisbane Roar	13	6	4	3	33	26	7	22
4 Sydney FC	13	6	2	5	33	23	10	20
5 Gold Coast United	13	6	2	5	27	23	4	20
6 Melbourne Heart	14	6	1	7	26	32	-6	19
7 Newcastle Jets	13	5	3	5	23	22	1	18
8 Adelaide United	13	3	4	6	15	26	-11	13
9 AIS	13	4	18	22	34	-12	13	
10 Melbourne Victory	13	2	11	10	11	31	-20	7

Next Round
Fri 3 Feb 12 5:30pm
CC Mariners FC Vs Brisbane Roar
Pluim Park, Central Coast
Sat 4 Feb 12 11:00am
Adelaide United FC Vs AIS
Burton Park
Sat 4 Feb 12 4:00pm
Gold Coast United FC Vs Perth Glory
Owen Park, Southport
Sat 4 Feb 12 5:00pm
Sydney FC Vs Newcastle Jets
WIN Jubilee, Kogarah
Sun 5 Feb 12 3:00pm
Melbourne Victory Vs Melbourne Heart
Kingston Heath, Cheltenham

Brown set up James Meyer but he smacked his effort of the Jet's woodwork.
On 75 minutes Haliti missed once again instead of squaring to a teammate as both sides defended well to hold on.

Canberra Utd crowned W-League champs

By Ann Odong

Canberra United claimed their maiden Westfield W-League title with a 3 - 2 win over Brisbane Roar at McKellar Park. In final that befit the name, the W-League leading all-time scorer Michelle Heyman bagged a brace to ensure United's undefeated season ended in glory.

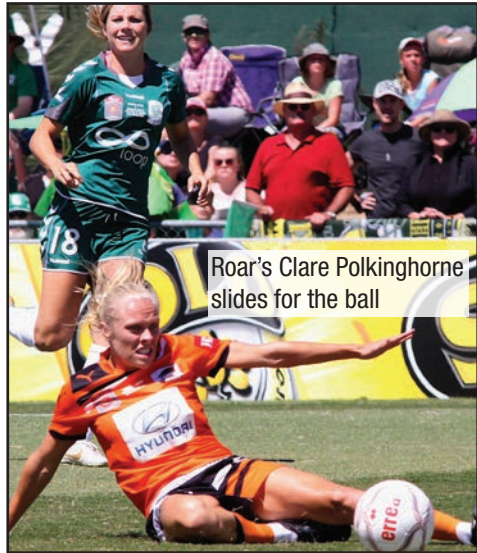
Warm favourites leading into the decider, Canberra took control of the final early with Taryn Hemmings heading over a Grace Gill free kick in the opening minutes. With Matildas star Sally Shipard controlling proceedings in the centre of the park, it wasn't long before Canberra took the lead. Brisbane were dispossessed in the centre allowing Hayley Raso in space, with the youngster finding Ashleigh Sykes. Sykes' first time ball picked out Heyman with the striker finishing far post across the sliding Casey Dumont.

Despite the warm conditions, the Green Machine clicked up a gear with the pacey trio of Raso, Heyman and Sykes causing several problems for the Brisbane Roar defence. Just over five minutes later Canberra doubled their lead. Gill constructed the attack when her diagonal ball found Heyman's run in behind the Roar defence. Heyman cut back to the 6 yard box and into the path of a sliding Ashleigh Sykes, who turned the ball home.

Two down, the defending champi-



Canberra Utd win the W-League title after remaining undefeated. Photos: ANN ODONG



Roar's Clare Polkinghorne slides for the ball



Michelle Heyman bagged a brace.

ons displayed their fighting qualities as they pulled one back in the 22nd minute. Forced to substitute Joanne Burgess with a knee injury, 'super sub' Emily Gielnik was released to the fray and within seconds lived up to her moniker. With her first touch, the teenager struck, low and hard first time, Tameka Butt's cross to give Brisbane life. Buoyed, the Roar looked for the equaliser with Catherine Cannuli's low strike forcing Lydia William to turn it around the post to maintain Canberra's lead at half time.

At the restart, Canberra United restored their two-goal lead when Taryn Hemmings' run forced a corner for Canberra. Gill's floated a corner to the back post with Heyman's towering header eluding Dumont and Harch on the line. Minutes later Roar again reduced the deficit when Butt earned a penalty after being brought down by Caitlin Cooper in the penalty area. Butt continued her record of scoring in every Westfield W-League Grand Final when she stepped up and converted the penalty.

To their credit Brisbane pushed hard for the equaliser and Williams again denied Brisbane as knocked away the ball from a goalward bound Gielnik. Twelve minutes from the whistle Heyman went close to claiming a hat-trick as her header flashed narrowly over the crossbar. Despite Brisbane's late efforts, Canberra were not to be denied in front of a record home crowd of 2512.

Grand Final
Canberra United 3 (Michelle Heyman 10', 55', Ashleigh Sykes 17')
Brisbane Roar 2 (Emily Gielnik 21', Tameka Butt 63' pen)
Saturday 28 January
Mckellar Park, Canberra
Local Kick-Off: 3pm
Crowd: 2,512 (Sold Out)
Referee: Kate Jacewicz / Alison Flynn / Sarah Ho / Casey Riebelt
Canberra United: Lydia Williams, Caitlin Cooper, Ellie Brush, Hayley Raso (Emma Kete 69'), Grace Gill (Caitlin Munoz 76') , Michelle Heyman, Nicole Sykes, Ashleigh Sykes, Sally Shipard, Taryn Hemmings, Jennifer Bisset
Substitutes Not Used: Georgia Yeoman-Dale, Snez Veljanovska, Aaron Clansey (Gk)
Yellow Cards: Sally Shipard 37'
Red Cards: Nil
Brisbane Roar: Casey Dumont (Gk), Laura Alleway (Olga Cebrian-Garcia 84'), Clare Polkinghorne (Ellen Beaumont 71'), Brooke Spence, Joanne Burgess (Emily Gielnik 21'), Kim Carroll, Catherine Cannuli, Lana Harch, Aivi Luik, Tameka Butt, Vedrana Popovic
Substitutes Not Used: Hoshimi Kishi, Rebecca Price
Yellow Cards: Emily Gielnik 50', Laura Alleway 60'
Red Cards: Nil

Couch Potato

* ALL TIMES ARE AEDT



SBS ONE
Sunday February 5th
10:30 AM FIFA World Cup 2014 Magazine

11:00 AM Les Murray's Football Feature

12:00 PM FIFA Futbol Mundial

Monday February 6th
04:30 PM FIFA Futbol Mundial
11:05 PM The World Game

SBS TWO
Monday February 6th
09:30 PM The World Game



Saturday 4-Feb
Bundesliga Round 20 Nuremberg v Dortmund 6:25am **LIVE**
Scottish Cup Round 5 Inverness v Celtic 11:40pm **LIVE**

Sunday 5-Feb
Bundesliga Round 20 Hamburg v Bayern Munich 4:25am **LIVE**
Ligue 1 Round 22 Bordeaux v Toulouse 6:45am **LIVE**
Ligue 1 Round 22 PSG v Evian 9:00am 1st Airing
Eredivisie Round 20 Den Haag v AZ 10:45am 1st Airing
Scottish Cup Round 5 Rangers v Dundee United 11:10pm **LIVE**

Monday 6-Feb
Scottish Cup Round 5 Hearts v St Johnstone 1:10am **LIVE**
Bundesliga Round 20 Kaiserslautern v Cologne 3:25am **LIVE**
Ligue 1 Round 22 Marseille v Lyon 6:45am **LIVE**
Bundesliga Round 20 Freiburg v Werder Bremen 12:30pm 1st Airing
Ligue 1 Round 22 Sochaux v Lille 2:15pm 1st Airing
Eredivisie Round 20 Ajax v Utrecht 4:00pm 1st Airing

Tuesday 7-Feb
Eredivisie Round 20 Heracles v PSV 8:15am 1st Airing

Wednesday 8-Feb
FA Cup Round 4 Replay Teams TBC 6:40am **LIVE**

Thursday 9-Feb
FA Cup Round 4 Replay Teams TBC 6:40am **LIVE**
Copa Libertadores 2nd Stage Vasco da Gama v Nacional 10:55am **LIVE**



The Futbol Town Show
Every Tuesday 7pm

Extra Time
Magazine Show
Every Tuesday 7.30pm

SMFC TV
Channel 31
Every Wed 7pm

The Green Gully Football Show
Every Saturday 10.30am

Friday 03rd February
06:00 am Bundesliga Matchday 19: Bayern Munich V Wolfsburg
08:00 am Bundesliga Weekly Matchday 19

Saturday 04th February
02:35 am Serie A Matchday 20: Udinese V Juventus
06:00 am Serie A Matchday 20: Lazio V Chievo

Sunday 05th February
03:00 am Bundesliga Weekly Highlights
06:00 am Bundesliga Matchday 19: Bayern Munich V Wolfsburg
08:00 am Bundesliga Weekly Highlights

Monday 06th February
02:30 am Serie A Matchday 21: Milan V Lazio

Tuesday 07th February
02:30 am Serie A Matchday 21: Palermo V Inter
04:30 am The Serie A Highlights Show
07:30 am Serie A Matchday 21: Milan V Lazio
09:30 am The Serie A Highlights Show

Wednesday 08th February
02:30 am Arsenal TV Arsenal V Blackburn Rovers
05:30 am FA Cup Classics Chelsea V Manchester United 3rd Round 97/98
06:00 am Serie A Matchday 22: Napoli V Milan

Thursday 09th February
03:05 am Bundesliga Matchday 20: Bayer Leverkusen V Stuttgart
06:00 am Serie A Matchday 22: Udinese V Fiorentina
08:00 am Bundesliga Weekly Highlights



ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE **LIVE**
Times listed are 7 minutes prior to kick-offs.

Week 26
Sat Feb 4 Arsenal v Blackburn 11.53 pm Fox 1
Sun Feb 5 QPR v Wolves 1.53 am Fox 1
Sun Feb 5 Norwich v Bolton 1.53 am Viewers Choice
Sun Feb 5 Stoke v Sunderland 1.53 am Viewers Choice
Sun Feb 5 West Brom v Swansea 1.53 am Viewers Choice
Sun Feb 5 Wigan v Everton 1.53 am Viewers Choice
Sun Feb 5 Man City v Fulham 4.23 am Fox 1
Mon Feb 6 Newcastle v Aston Villa 12.23 am Fox 1
Mon Feb 6 Chelsea v Man Utd 2.45 am Fox 1
Tue Feb 7 Liverpool v Tottenham 6.45 am Fox 1

ENGLISH FOOTBALL LEAGUE
Sat Feb 4 West Ham v Millwall 11.26 pm Viewers Choice

A-LEAGUE **LIVE**
Fri Feb 3 Adelaide v Wellington 8.00 pm
Sat Feb 4 Central Coast v Brisbane 5.30 pm
Sat Feb 4 Melbourne Heart v Melbourne 7.45 pm
Sun Feb 5 Sydney v Newcastle 5.00 pm
Sun Feb 6 Perth v Gold Coast 10.00 pm

FOX SPORTS FC
Tue Feb 7 8.30 pm

QUEENS OF FOOTBALL!

Canberra United are Westfield W-League Champions for the first time after a 3-2 win over Brisbane Roar. An action-packed and high quality match proved a fitting finale to the season with Canberra completing an unbeaten season in front of a capacity crowd at their Belconnen home ground. GW's ANN ODONG was on hand to capture all the colour and excitement of the day.



Green with envy: Canberra United fans show their colours.



Brisbane Roar came up just short in defending their title.



Klimkova for PM! Canberra's win meant they went through all 12 matches without defeat while Jitka Klimkova became the first female to coach a team to the Westfield W-League crown.



What all the fuss is about...



Michelle Heyman crowned a remarkable season with a double to take her season tally to 15 goals.



To the victors the spoils...



Canberra United keeper Lydia Williams.

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Rale Rasic

BLAST FROM THE PAST



With Roy Hay

Who is as passionate about the game as Paolo di Canio, thinks as deeply about it as Arrigo Sacchi, speaks as pungently about its successes and failures as Brian Glanville, divides people in their estimation of him as much as Shane Warne does in cricket and is still learning about the game in his eighth decade, like Sir Alex Ferguson? None other than Zvonimir 'Rale' Rasic, the first man to coach an Australian team to a World Cup final tournament and one of the greatest individual influences on the development of the game in this country.

To understand the man you have to appreciate that he lost both parents in early childhood, spent more than a decade in orphanages in Yugoslavia and lost contact with his three siblings until he was in his late teens. His memories of time in the orphanages come across as overwhelmingly positive, but there is no doubt that they taught him survival skills, self-reliance and a ruthlessness which enabled him to become a good player and an exceptional coach.

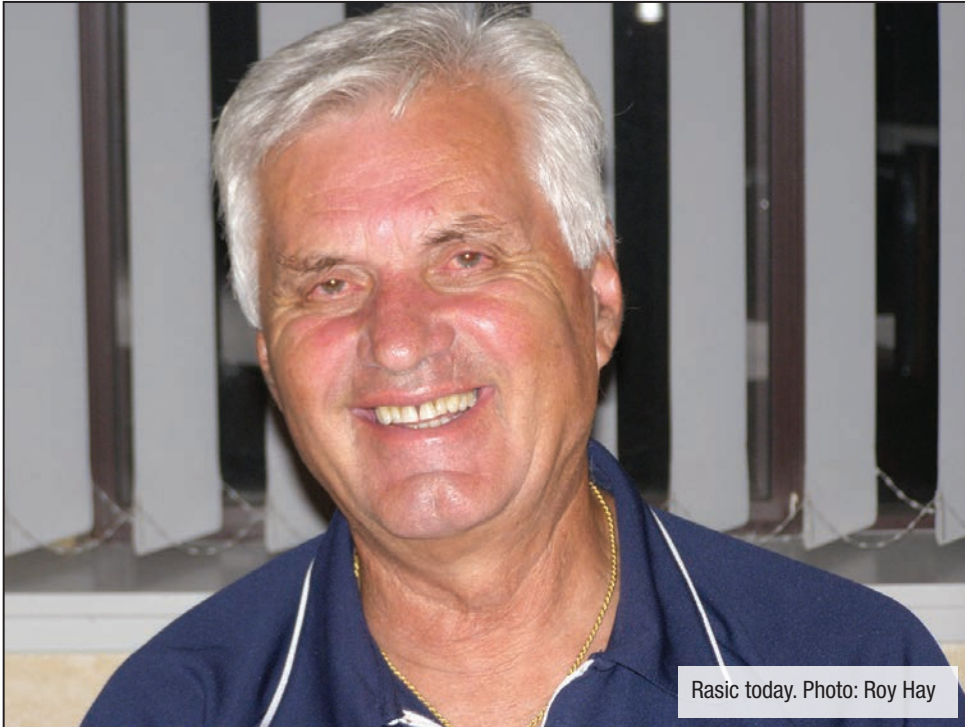
He came to Australia in the winter of 1962 and remembers the physical and cultural shock of his arrival at Essendon Airport wearing only a tee shirt and shorts. He played with JUST alongside Frank Micic, Billy Rice, Veroslav Mladenovic, Aleksander Jagodic, Tommy Stankovic and Jim Milisavljevic, winning the Dockerty Cup and the State League in 1963. He represented Victoria in a three-

two win over FC Basel in 1964. After a spell back in Yugoslavia to complete his national service and a university degree, he returned to Australia in 1966 as coach at JUST from 1967 to 1969. He played four games for Yugal in 1966 under Joe Vlasits. After JUST, Rasic joined Melbourne HSC (Hungaria) in 1970 and took them to second place in the State League after they had been nearly relegated. He then succeeded Frank Arok as coach at Sydney's St George Budapest.

Sir Arthur George, as president of the Australian Soccer Federation, appointed Rale Rasic coach of the Socceroos, with the task of qualifying for the World Cup in West Germany in 1974. Despite the expense involved, Rasic was backed to take a squad of experienced and younger players on an extensive overseas tour in late 1970 and the nucleus of the 1974 team emerged from that experience.

The tour took in New Caledonia, Hong Kong, Macao, Iran, Israel, Greece, England, Ireland and Mexico. The squad included Jack Reilly, Manfred Schaefer, Peter Wilson, Sandy Irvine, Dennis Yaager, John Doyle, Jim Mackay, Johnny Warren, George Blues, Mike Denton, Adrian Alston, Ray Richards, Billy Vojtek, John Roche, David Keddie, John Perrin, Colin Curran, Harry Williams and Roger Romanowicz. Nine of them went to Germany in 1974. Peter Wilson, the quiet and enigmatic miner, succeeded Johnny Warren as captain during the subsequent campaign, when Warren was out of action with a serious knee injury from which

History maker extraordinaire



Rasic today. Photo: Roy Hay

he never fully recovered. Jimmy Mackay influenced the tactical approach of the side. Rasic commented on his midfield general: 'I'll never forget Australia's 3-1 win over Greece in Athens in 1970. Not only did Mackay mark Mimis Domazos out of the game, he also scored our second goal ... Mackay was certainly one of the most imaginative midfielders ever to have played in Australia ... He was a football freak'.

In Germany Australia lost its opening games against both East and West Germany. Jimmy Rooney remembers walking out against the West German side in Hamburg as a surreal experience. 'Here was me, a storeman, standing next to Franz Beckenbauer. But we competed very well, especially against East Germany. We did well to be in the game for

so long and had a couple of chances. We probably played about 25-30 per cent above ourselves because of the occasion. We had nothing to lose.' He assessed his coach, 'Rale was the master. He was and is a learned man. He knew the culture of the different countries. He knew all the great players from his contacts all round the world. He had a dossier on all our opponents. Rale did it. He made us what we were in 1974.'

Subsequently Sir Arthur George and Rasic fell out, partly, according to Rale, because of his association with Gough Whitlam and the Labor Party, while George was much more closely associated with the Liberals. Rasic's criticisms of the football establishment of the day did not endear him to George.

Rasic's coaching record is in the history books and he once made a brilliant encapsulation of the special problems facing anyone coaching an Australian team in the postwar period. Unlike others overseas who had to chose from a basically homogenous domestic pool, the Australian coach had to be a barman, having to mix the cocktail of different nationalities and styles in one effective team. Mind you, he had to act as bouncer as well. Among the influences on him Rasic notes that of Helenio Herrera of Inter Milan whose catenaccio formation oozed the ability to close up a game after taking a narrow lead. Hence Rasic is scathing about Terry Venables' failure to bring on Milan Ivanovic and prevent the successful resurgence by Iran on that fateful night

in 1997 at the Melbourne Cricket Ground when Australia conceded a two-goal lead and hence failed to get to the World Cup in France.

The list of clubs that Rasic coached is staggering, ranging from his first stint as player-coach at JUST in Melbourne in the 1960s through St George in Sydney in 1970 and then, after his five years with the Socceroos, to Marconi, Pan Hellenic, Adelaide City, Blacktown, South Melbourne and Canberra Cosmos. He also coached State League teams in New South Wales and has run football academies and junior coaching clinics all over the country with legends of the game from Sir Stanley Matthews to Kevin Keegan and Johnny Warren.

He has been on several trips to Brazil and formed links with the Olé Football Academy in Sao Paulo. He was a friend of Brazilian superstar Socrates who died late last year and is on first-name terms with legions of players and coaches overseas.

Rale Rasic attended the 2011 Women's World Cup in Germany and emphasised the thoughtful and effective organisation of the tournament and the tactical maturity of the Japanese team, which overcame physical limitations to defeat a series of more fancied opponents. He wished some men's teams could show similar capacities. He also talked about the 265 centres of excellence established in Germany in the last five years, virtually without public finance. These have been located in smaller urban and rural centres, with the coaching staff paid by Deutscher Fussball-Bund. The costs of the individual to play the game are much lower than they are here in Australia, he pointed out.

So Rasic still has things to teach us about the game and its place in Australia and the world today. Time spent in his company is never wasted and his enthusiasm for football inspires me every time we meet.




Rale Rasic with Frank Stewart, Federal Minister for Tourism and Recreation, and Sir Arthur George. Source: Laurie Schwab collection, Deakin University Library.



Rale Rasic, Jimmy Rooney and John Kosmina. Three great players who became outstanding coaches. Photo: Les Shorrock collection, Deakin University Library.



A stellar line-up of coaches at St George in Sydney in the 1970s. Left to right: D. Polgar, R. Hegyesi, 'Uncle' Joe Vlasits, Frank Arok, Rale Rasic. Source: Laurie Schwab collection, Deakin University Library.



The **Rale Rasic** Story

As told to Ray Gatt

The Socceroos' First World Cup Coach

Like another soft shoe shuffler, Ferenc Puskas, Rasic did not need to wear football boots to perform feats of skill. Source: Cover of Ray Gatt's biography of Rasic.

The Rale Rasic Fact File	
Full name Zvonimir Rašić	
Date of birth December 26, 1935 (age 76)	
Place of birth Mostar, Kingdom of Yugoslavia	
Senior playing career	National team
FK Proleter Zrenjanin	Yugoslavia U21
FK Vojvodina	
FK Spartak Subotica	
1961-62 FK Borac Banja Luka	
1962-69 Footscray JUST	
Teams managed	
1969 Footscray JUST	1992 Canterbury-Marrickville
1969-74 Australia	1996 Rockdale Ilinden
1971 St George	1997 Fairfield Bulls
1972-73 Marconi Stallions	1997-99 Canberra Cosmos
1974 Pan Hellenic	2002-03 Marconi Stallions
1977-78 Marconi Stallions	(Technical Director)
1979-80 Adelaide City	
1981-82 Blacktown City	NSL Coach of the Year
1983 South Melbourne FC	1977
1987-88 A.P.I.A. Leichhardt	1987

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PICS OF ROUND 19



A young Adelaide United fan shows his concern as chances go begging in the match against Perth Glory. Photo: ADAM BUTLER

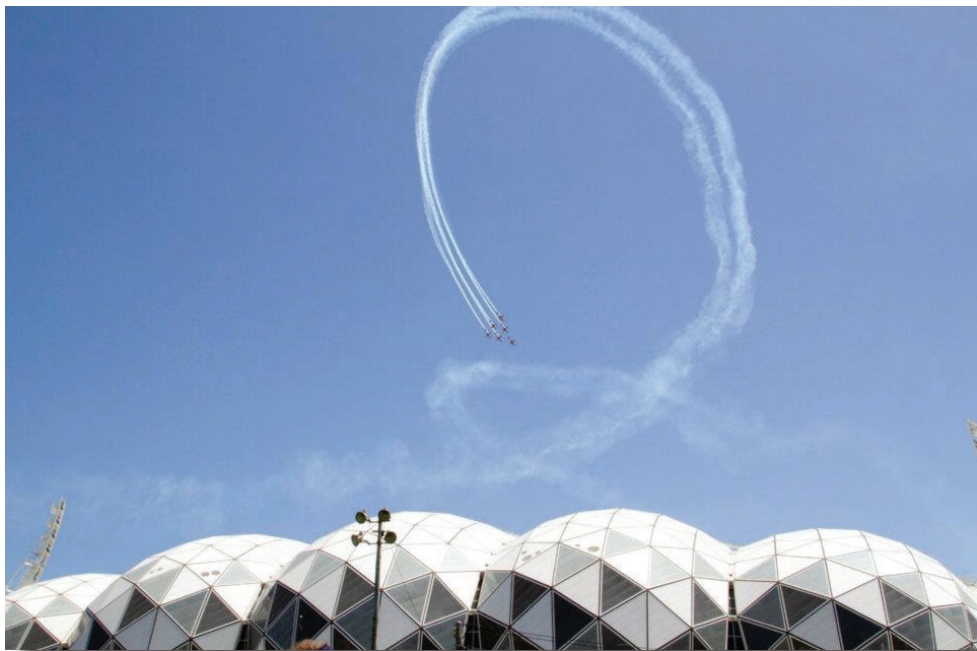


Tiago Calvano savours the moment as the Jets upset the Roar and win their first game on the road for over a year. Photo: ADRIAN GAGLIONE

Les Shorrock's Action Packed Picture Page



SFC's Cove stake their claim at AAMI Park. Photo: TIM SIZE



Australia Day celebrations were in full force for the hugely anticipated Victory v Sydney FC clash. Photo: ANITA MILAS



Three Wise Men from Fox Sports in Robbie Slater, Michael Zappone and Ross Aloisi front the cameras before Adelaide United v Perth Glory. Photo: ADAM BUTLER



Brace yourself! Fabio does an impression of 'Jaws' from James Bond's Moonraker. Photo: ANITA MILAS



Great to see GW comes in handy as more than just a good ol' read. Photo: TIME SIZE

Latin Wrap

Francis Fields

Summer in Argentina does not necessarily mean a break when it comes to football. Argentina’s biggest rivalry, whether they are playing an off-season warm-up as in this case or a decisive Libertadores Cup clash or anything in between, puts all others in the shade.

There were even coffins that Boca Juniors’ notorious hardcore fans “La Doce” brought to signify the death of its arch rival. In a packed Malvinas Argentinas stadium there were 40,000 loud and passionate fans, as usual, in the Andean city of Mendoza.

River Plate surrendered with some sloppy marking to leave Mouche with a free header to the bottom corner of goalkeeper Daniel Vega. It was the second and final “superclásico” between the two in the summer of 2012.

The Torneo de Verano - the summer tournament is a long and proud mini round-robin tournament traditionally played across regional cities in Argentina, particularly in the sea side resort of Mar del Plata.

This time round with giants River Plate in the Primera B, the second tier division with arch rivals Boca Juniors the current holders of the Apertura or opening championship, the stakes were high and of course, the pride of being one of two of Argentina’s biggest clubs.

The first version of the two-leg series clásico was played in the northern city of Resistencia del Chaco where Boca had also won 2-0 with River’s Alejandro Domínguez given his marching orders.

Boca were the more solid team on Sunday in Mendoza, exhibiting the virtues of their comfortable championship win in last year’s Apertura when they went unbeaten in the 19 matches and conceded only six goals, finishing 12 points clear of their closest challengers.

It was the second division side that boasts with former France international David Trézeguet up front who had most of the possession in the match.

Boca however, true to its playing style and to the tactical instructions of coach Julio César Falcioni contained the pressure and made full advantage of its rivals’ mistakes to break quickly on the counter.

Trézeguet was stretchered off after only ten minutes into the derby. River Plate has had both on and off-field dramas since their humiliating relegation in June. The club on the pitch however have attempted to recapture its attacking brand of football they are famous for but have struggled to cling to second place and potential promotion back into Primera A.

With Pablo Mouche scoring the winner on Monday morning’s blockbuster (AEST) against arch rivals River Plate in Mendoza, at the conclusion of the match, Mouche spoke about playing its classic rival and the importance for Boca Juniors to win “at all costs”.

“It was an important victory, in fact it is always beautiful to win and especially against River. The important thing however is what lies ahead for us”, admitted Mouche.

Despite Mouche’s brilliant performances of late, the number 7 has not scored many goals. He is aware of the situation however he declared to television station Fox Sports, that



The coveted Libertadores tournament trophy sitting quietly alongside the official match ball ahead of its opening match tomorrow.

his priority is always what the team’s ambitions lie.

“I am working hard for the team. It’s not about a single player, about me or the coach, it is about the team as a unit. This year however on a personal level, I am aiming to grow as a player and score more goals, there’s no doubt about that”.

Mouche also emphasised the need to clock up more minutes of playing action.

“This two-legged series against River has served us well to get more minutes on the park because we have three competitions to play this year”.

Boca Juniors is out to defend its 2011 Apertura title while beginning its campaign in the prestigious Copa Libertadores against Venezuelan champion Zamora.

Then later in the year, the 2012 Apertura commences in reference to the third competition to be played. The first division Clausura championship kicks off on February 10.

Copa Libertadores update
Paraguay’s Libertad and Argentina’s Arsenal de Sarandí both avoided upsets on Wednesday and did enough to qualify for the group stages of the 2012 Copa Libertadores. Both will join already strong groups, and their victories could be just the first two of a clean sweep for the favored sides in the play-offs.

Ecuadorian side El Nacional did well to grab a 1-0 home win in the first leg of the playoff series, but Libertad were at their best on Tuesday night as they quickly erased that deficit for a 4-1 win.

Argentinian World Cup-winner Jorge Burruchaga, coach at Libertad was relieved to see Pablo Velázquez scoring just one minute with a mistake by goalkeeper Danny Cruzelio, who was replaced at halftime, equalizing the tie. El Nacional bounced back with a 12th minute goal, but that only motivated the home side further, as they went on to score three more times. José Núñez and Rodolfo Gamarra scored before the halftime break and Luciano Civelli added the exclamation point in stoppage time.

In the other tie, Arsenal’s 3-0 win at home, they hardly had to put their best foot forward in the away leg in Peru. Sergio Ibarra made things mildly interesting with a goal just before halftime, but his club failed to score again. Luciano Leguizamón scored in the 85th minute to end the tie.

Uruguayan giants back from Chile tour

Nacional returned yesterday, “in a positive mood” after playing two friendly matches of their summer tour of Chile ahead of its debut in the Copa Libertadores next week against Brazil’s Vasco Da Gama in Rio de Janeiro.

On Saturday evening it was the Uruguayan side that notched an emphatic 5-3 win over Everton in the beachside city of Viña del Mar.

Played at the Sausalito stadium, it was an opportunity for coach Marcelo Gallardo to try alternatives to a side that was completely different the one that drew against Copa Sudamericana holders Universidad de Chile.

The flight from Santiago to Montevideo was delayed for nearly an hour meanwhile upon arriving at the Uruguayan capital, it was defender Andrés Scotti holding one of the two trophies obtained from the two friendly matches against holders Universidad de Chile and second division side Everton.

“This trophy is from the first match against Universidad de Chile. They’re good matches so we can prepare for the season ahead. To play against tough rivals is perfect, in good pitches as well is key. Luckily also, nobody picked up an injury and this means we are looking strong”, emphasised the Uruguayan international.

In addition, Scotti referred to the nature of the friendly matches.

“We are alert that playing teams like Universidad de Chile even in a friendly is merely a friendly. We took it with the utmost importance just like a Copa Libertadores match. Still, we have areas to improve on especially with the ball but overall our coach is happy with our tactical display. In our second match against Everton, our ball play was a lot better though we lacked that same tactical discipline. Slowly we will find that balance we need”, Scotti added.

One player who had his own legion of fans waiting at Montevideo’s international airport was Santiago Romero. The youngster scored his first two goals in his professional career against Everton and had a smile on face upon seeing his family at the arrival terminal.

For Argentinian Marcos Aguirre, the mood is on a high after the two matches played over the past week.

“We had good results and everybody in the squad clocked up playing minutes which is good for everybody. Against Universidad de Chile, it was a tough match and we knew it would be, whereas with Everton we were far superior and we are looking very well for our Libertadores debut”, reassured Aguirre.

Coach Marcelo Gallardo also had words about his players adding that the squad is eager to show their qualities and are ready to play. The current Uruguayan club champion plays against Vasco da Gama on the 8th of February.

“Show me the money!”
Players from Brazilian league runner-up Vasco da Gama refused to report to the team’s hotel to protest delayed salaries.

The players were expected to report to the hotel on Tuesday but said they will only show up on Wednesday morning, the day the team will play Bangu in the Rio de Janeiro state championship.

Club director Daniel Freitas told the UOL website that “it’s their way of protesting against what has been happening.”

Vasco reportedly still owes the salaries for the month of December. The team won last year’s Brazilian Cup and finished second to Corinthians in the Brazilian league.

Season 2012 underway in Chile
 Last Friday marked the beginning of the “Apertura” or opening championship season in Chile. The opening match ended in a 1-0 victory for O’Higgins over Antofagasta.

The “Apertura,” extends from January to June and the closing season, the “Clausura,” runs from July to December, as the current system goes since being implemented in 2002 with certain modifications added for determining continental club spots.

The biggest high profile game on the weekend involved Universidad Católica, starting its championship hopes with a victory over Palestino, 2-1.

Saturday also saw a victory by the newly promoted Rangers over La Serena, 2-0. Huachipato, meanwhile, claimed a 2-1 victory over Santiago Wanderers, who played with a poor performance continued from last season.

Sunday’s action centered on Colo Colo’s first match. With their last title in the 2009 Clausura, giants Colo Colo are looking to find silverware this season. However, it still seems elusive after a 0-0 draw against Iquique at home. Doubts and impatience continue to arise from fans with regards to the coaching and playing style after a questionable performance during the 2011 season.

On Sunday, Unión La Calera also made a modest start to the season against Universidad de Concepción with a 1-1 draw and Cobresal also sharing the points with a 1-1 draw to Unión San Felipe, who were nearly relegated last season. The day’s action



A model displays the 2012 home kit for Ecuadorian giants Liga de Quito in their “Noche Blanca” evening.

ended with Unión Española in a 2-0 victory over Audax Italiano in what is known as the “colonial derby” between two ethnic-backed clubs founded by migrant Spanish and Italian communities.

Last year’s treble champions Universidad de Chile debut against Cobreloa was postponed for a later date because both teams were finalists in the 2011 Clausura and were given more time to rest. “La U” will now start its quest for the defence of its remarkable 2011 season this Saturday against La Serena after losing on mid-week in a friendly tie to rivals Colo-Colo in the southern city of Temuco, 2-1.

It will be an interesting time for coach Jorge Sampaoli in filling the shoes of Eduardo Vargas with youngster signing Junior Fernandes already showing promise. Gustavo Canales up front remains at the club after a frustrated transfer move to China alongside captain José Rojas who failed a medical test due to a reported heart problem while on transfer to Rio de Janeiro giants Botafogo of Brazil.

The club concepts of “night” shows

It is probably slightly difficult to explain the cultural importance in South American football about certain events that staged throughout a football season.

The word “noche” is night in Spanish and it is used by clubs to inaugurate their upcoming seasons.

Take for instance, La “Noche Blanca” which literally translates to “the White night” and in this sense, is an event hosted by Ecuadorian super club Liga Deportiva Universitaria de Quito or simply LDU.

Held at the colossal stadium, the Casa Blanca (the White House) last week, Liga presented both its new signings for the new season and their new Umbro 2012 home and away kits. In true South American kit launch tradition, a couple of Ecuadorian models

were on hand to model the new LDU strips.

Chilean giants Colo-Colo hosted its “Noche Alba” receiving their Peruvian friends Alianza Lima last week at home at the Monumental stadium. It was a 2-0 win in a night that showcased its new signings for season 2012.

D’Alessandro says no to China move

Andrés D’Alessandro had a received a lucrative contract offer for two years and a US \$10 million move to China’s Shanghai Shenhua but finally made a decision yesterday to stay at this current club, Internacional of Porto Alegre.

Staying with the gaúcho club is the priority for the crafty Argentine midfielder whom is regarded an idol to Internacional fans.

The decision and announcement was made yesterday on the club’s official page.

It released a press statement declaring, “I am happy to stay at Inter. I shall stay at a club that has received me very well and gives me a lot of affection, especially from its fans. I am very proud to be able to continue wearing this jersey. Sometimes football can be put you in difficult situations but I am convinced that my decision is the right one”.

The former River Plate, San Lorenzo, Portsmouth, VfL Wolfsburg and Real Zaragoza midfielder had agreed on an improved contract.

“I want to say thanks for the Internacional fans. I have never gone through some emotions and thanks to them, I feel what I feel for the club”, concluded D’Alessandro upon his written confirmation on the club’s website.

The 30-year-old midfielder joined Internacional from San Lorenzo in 2008, and has since developed into a key player with the southern Brazilian side, most notably winning the Copa Libertadores in 2010.

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Substandard deadline day in Premier League as FFP looms

LONDON CALLING



With Sam Collins in the UK

Prudence. It's a word that Premier League bosses, one or two apart, haven't been too familiar with in recent seasons. The temptation to splash out colossal amounts of cash with one or two hours to go in January transfer markets was too hard to avoid for most. But this window was different. Very different. But why? There has been much cogitation since the window "slammed shut" - as Sky Sports News, the deadline day protagonists, love to say - over what has brought about this abatement in spending across England.

Some point to the infamous Fernando Torres and Andy Carroll deals twelve months earlier; combined, both cost their new clubs, Chelsea and Liverpool, £85m in transfer fees alone. But it wasn't just these two excessive deals that seemingly caused apprehension for managers in England this year. Manchester City's signing from Wolfsburg, Edin Dzeko, for £27m and David Luiz's move from Benfica, to join

Torres at Chelsea, for the best part of £25m, still reside in the memories of many. Though the growing feeling is that clubs are beginning to anticipate the introduction of Financial Fair Play (FFP) - a set of regulations insisting that clubs can only spend what they earn. UEFA will bring FFP into fruition for the 2014/15 campaign, but this season and next, count towards that final assessment from UEFA in 2014. Clubs which fail to meet the expectations of FFP face severe sanctions, from deducted points to player bans. Last week, Gianni Infantino, the general secretary of European football's governing body, reminded Europe of it's expenditure allowances. "We must end this negative spiral and gamble for success. These losses cannot continue." A staggering thirteen clubs would fail to meet the guidelines were they applied tomorrow.

In January last year, a record total of £225m was spent by coaches in the English top-flight on new talent, whilst last month, that total reached just short of £60m. It's the second lowest total spent in the month of January in the last seven seasons. The looming presence of FFP halted much of the anarchy that frequently exists on deadline day, though, thankfully, there were some notable transfer deals to converse over. Queens Park Rangers were the busiest side on Tuesday, adding qual-



Newcastle United splashed £10m on Senegalese striker Papiss Demba Cisse

ity fire-power and experience to their squad, in the shape of strikers Djibril Cisse and Bobby Zamora for around £10m. With the additions of defenders Nedum Onuaha and Taye Taiwo earlier in the window too, Mark Hughes can have realistic hopes of keeping his new side in the division. David Moyes again pronounced his astuteness in the market, after some ingenious bits of last-minute business. The devoted Scot managed to bring in £5.5m forward Nikica Jelavic from Rangers, a move the Glaswegian assumes will

end his side's scoring troubles this season. Perhaps the move which will get Everton fans animated most though, is the return to Goodison Park of Steven Pienaar, on-loan from Tottenham where the South African failed to settle. Moyes also managed to offload Russian flop Diniyar Bilyaletdinov back to Russia, and 33-year old forward Louis Saha to Spurs.

Speaking of Harry Redknapp's side, it is undoubtedly the White Hart Lane faithful who will be most disappointed with

the activity that took pace in the past four weeks. Whilst disillusioned trio Verdan Corluka, Roman Pavlyuchenko and Sebastien Bassong were moved on - to Bayer Leverkusen, Lokomotiv Moscow and Wolves respectively - their replacements, the aforementioned Saha, and out of favour Blackburn defender Ryan Nelsen, left the majority of Spurs fans bewildered, even if both deals are only until the summer. Reported moves for Christopher Samba and Loic Remy never materialised for the side who look set to be plying

their trade in the Champions League again next season. Elsewhere, Manchester City caught the eye with the capture of Chilean international David Pizarro on loan from Roma. Roberto Mancini knows the midfielder well from their time together at Inter Milan, and despite injury and attitude problems, the 32-year old could play a vital part in City's title run-in. One manager who is a strong advocate of FFP, Arsene Wenger, was predictably in a reposeful state as clubs strived to get business completed before the 11pm deadline. Arsenal spent just £440k on the final day of the window, adding little-known German starlet Thomas Eisfeld to their roster from Borussia Dortmund.

Papiss Demba Cisse, the Senegalese striker, who joined Newcastle United for £10m two weeks ago, was the most expensive signing of the window, but in hindsight, it was probably the return of Premier League legends Thierry Henry and Paul Scholes which caused the most commotion in January. As Wenger put it a few days ago, "It looks like the best transfer market is to get your old players back." Sir Alex Ferguson would presumably agree. Scholes' performances for the champions since returning have been admirable.

It wasn't just clubs on these shores that took notice of the impending FFP regulations in the past month, but European heavyweights such as Real Madrid, Barcelona, AC Milan and Inter Milan all spent next to nothing too.

"This is the last wake up call", warned Infantino as clubs prepare for a new implementation of financial control. It appears UEFA have finally got their message across.

FOOTBALL BRIEFS

Coupe de la Ligue: Marseille 2 Nice 1

Marseille booked their place in the Coupe de la Ligue final with a 2-1 win over Nice on Wednesday.

Didier Deschamps' side knew a meeting with Lyon in the showpiece would await them if they were successful and they made a bright start when Loic Remy opened the scoring after 16 minutes at the Stade Velodrome.

Nice hit back on the stroke of half-time when Tunisian Anthony Mounier netted for the visitors.

Brazilian Brandao restored Marseille's lead just 12 minutes into the second half, but their task was made harder when Mathieu Valbuena was given a second yellow card after 64 minutes.

Nice could not make the most of their numerical advantage though, which only lasted 19 minutes until Ivorian Franck Dja Djedje was sent off for the visitors.

The win extended Marseille's unbeaten record to 12 matches in all competitions, with 11 of them resulting in victories.

Copa del Rey: Valencia 1 Barcelona 1

Barcelona are likely to qualify for the Copa del Rey final after they drew 1-1 at Valencia in the semi-final first leg on Wednesday.

The Catalan giants could have won the match but Lionel Messi's second-half spot-kick was saved by Valencia goalkeeper Diego Alves.

But they will still be happy with a point from a tricky away leg, secured after Carles Puyol cancelled out Jonas' opener for Valencia.

The hosts were baffled when Barcelona goalkeeper Jose Pinto appeared to handle the ball outside the penalty area in the early stages.

Pinto prevented Roberto Soldado from giving Valencia an early lead with a save that infuriated the home crowd at the Mestalla.

Valencia's protests were turned down but they started well and soon had the game's first goal when they won the ball off Barcelona in a good area, before Jeremy Mathieu's clever cut-back was converted by Jonas for his fourth goal in the competition this season.

Alexis Sanchez almost responded immediately for Barca, but his attempt was brilliantly saved by Diego Alves, although the resulting corner produced the equaliser as unmarked Puyol headed home.

Dutch Cup wrap: AZ, Heracles into last four

AZ Alkmaar and Heracles both progressed to the semi-finals of the Dutch Cup on Wednesday.

AZ booked their spot in the last four with a 2-1 win over third-tier outfit GVVV, although they were made to work for their victory.

Dennis van Meegdenburg handed the underdogs the lead after just 10 minutes, stunning the AFAS Stadion crowd.

With AZ sitting third in the Eredivisie, just two points behind table-toppers PSV, an easy win was expected for Gert Verbeek's side and they responded well with a quick equaliser.

That goal came from Belgian Maarten Martens and he was to have a telling impact on the game, also scoring the winning goal after 66 minutes.

That did not stop AZ suffering some nervy moments at the end, but they held firm to seal a semi-final berth.

Heracles won far easier, cruising past fellow top-flight side RKC Waalwijk 3-0 in Almelo.

Sweden's Samuel Armenteros and Ghanaian Kwame Quansah scored in the first-half for the winners before Marko Vejinovic wrapped up the win with his 58th minute goal.

Heerenveen had already progressed to the last four on Tuesday, while PSV while take on NEC Nijmegen for the last semi-final spot on Thursday.

Ferguson hopeful of Rooney return

Sir Alex Ferguson is hopeful attacking duo Wayne Rooney and Nani will be available for Manchester United's trip to Chelsea this Sunday.

The pair has missed United's last two games - the 2-1 FA Cup defeat at the hands of Liverpool and their 2-0 win over Stoke on Tuesday.

But Ferguson is optimistic Rooney and Nani could be available for their crucial trip to Stamford Bridge this weekend, as well as long-term absentee Ashley Young.

"We're hopeful Wayne Rooney, Nani and possibly Ashley Young will be fit for Sunday," Ferguson told MUTV.

The United boss is also sweating on the fitness of goalkeepers Anders Lindegaard and David de Gea, who were both injured in the run up to United's win over Stoke, with 21-year-old Ben Amos likely to once again deputise.

The victory over Stoke took United to 54 points for the season, level with rivals Manchester City at the top of the table, but Ferguson refused to get carried away and said there was still a long way to go in the title race.

"It's still early doors," he said. "It's only the last day in January. I always say that March is a very important month, as well as the beginning of April. We play Manchester City in April, for instance."

Transfer window slams shut

Ghana midfielder Sulley Muntari has joined AC Milan from rivals Inter as the January transfer window closed on Tuesday.

The end to last year's January window saw high-profile and big-money moves for Andy Carroll, to Liverpool, and Fernando Torres to Chelsea.

While it was a quieter finish this time around, Muntari, 27, crossed the Milan divide and has been given a deal until the end of the season.

AC Milan boss Massimiliano Allegri was delighted to add Muntari and believes he has plenty to offer.

"I met Muntari when I was collaborating with (Giovanni) Galeone at Udinese and I saw him at work there for three or four months. I think he is a player who hasn't lived up to his potential until now," Allegri said.

"He's a technical player, strong and dynamic and will surely be a good signing for Milan."

Muntari will join his new team-mates when he returns from the Africa Cup of Nations, where Ghana are on the verge of progressing to the quarter-finals. Inter also lost Thiago Motta, who joined big-spending Ligue 1 leaders Paris-Saint Germain.

To compensate for the loss of the two

midfielders, Inter Milan signed Colombian Fredy Guarin, initially on loan, and Sampdoria's Angelo Palombo.

Brazilian defender Juan has also joined Claudio Ranieri's men.

Both Milan clubs were in a race to sign want-away Manchester City forward Carlos Tevez, but he will remain at Etihad Stadium.

In other moves, Fulham snapped up Australian Ryan Williams from Portsmouth on a two-and-a-half year deal, while Bolton signed Watford striker Marvin Sordell.



Aussie Ryan Williams is Fulham bound after signing from Portsmouth

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EPL Wrap



Steven Talevski
United pulls level with City on top

Manchester United have joined cross town rivals Manchester City on top of the Premier League table after the citizens were shocked with a one nil defeat away to Everton.

A 60th minute strike from Darron Gibson was enough to hand Everton the surprise three points as he allowed former club Manchester United to go level on points with Manchester City after their victory over Stoke City.

Penalties either side of half time from Javier Hernandez and Dimitar Berbatov was enough to hand United the three points at Old Trafford.

Manchester United Manager Sir Alex Ferguson claimed the victory over Stoke was a "significant" step in their attempts to win back to back Premier League titles.

"We kept our composure and were very patient. We have won with two penalties but the manner in which we have played our football was the most important thing," Ferguson said.

"It's still early doors [in terms of the title race]. It's only the last day in January. I always say that March is a very important month, as well as the beginning of April. We play Manchester City in April, for instance."

Ferguson also joked about Darron Gibson's winner against Manchester City saying "it was all part of the plan" as the player was sold to Everton for an undisclosed fee less than three weeks earlier.

Meanwhile Manchester City manager Roberto Mancini accepted to take the blame for his side's disappointing performance.

"I didn't prepare well for this game. I thought it was maybe easier. I know here it is never easy, never," Mancini said.

"I acknowledge my mistake. It is important for me to know this because, like this, I can't do the same mistakes in the next game."



Djibril Cisse scores on his debut but Aston Villa come back from two down to draw 2-2.

"The players put everything on the pitch but I made some mistakes during the last three days preparing for this game."

City's slip up also allowed Tottenham to close the gap to five points between them and the top as they convincingly defeated bottom placed Wigan 3-1 courtesy from a double from Gareth Bale and a strike from Luka Modric.

The victory also meant that Spurs extended the gap between them and fourth placed Chelsea to seven points after Chelsea escaped Liberty Stadium with a one all draw thanks to an unfortunate Neil Taylor own goal in the 93rd minute.

Chelsea's slip up put more pressure on their fourth position on the table and final Champions League spot as both Liverpool and Newcastle United recorded important victories.

Newcastle United is now in fifth position a mere three points behind Chelsea after their two nil victory over relegation zone battlers Blackburn Rovers.

A point behind Newcastle are Liverpool who defeated Wolverhampton three nil with Andy Carroll scoring just his fifth goal for the club just a year and a day after his record 35 million pound transfer.

Meanwhile Arsenal were held to a scoreless draw at The DW Stadium which saw them fall to seventh position as the race for Champions League positions heats up.

In other results Queens Park Rangers took an important point in their quest of

survival in the Premier League after they managed a two all draw away to Aston Villa with transfer deadline day signing Djibril Cisse scoring on debut for the Rangers.

In the only other two match's mid-week, Sunderland defeated Norwich three nil while Fulham were held one all at home against West Bromwich Albion.

EPL PREVIEW
After a round of mid-week fixtures, there is no rest for Premier League clubs as they prepare for another weekend of fixtures highlighted by the clash between Chelsea and joint top of the table Manchester United.

This weekend's other big clash sees third placed Tottenham travel to Anfield to face Liverpool with the home side looking to avenge their four nil loss back in September.

Tottenham were another team active on transfer deadline day securing the surprise signings of former Manchester United striker Louis Saha from Everton and possibly New Zealand Captain Ryan Nelsen, however that is yet to be confirmed by the club.

With new players coming into the side, defender Sebastian Bassong has moved on loan to Wolverhampton, Steven Pienaar sent back on loan to former club Everton and striker Roman Pavlyuchenko has been sold to Lokomotiv Moscow pending a medical.

Everton also added Nikica Jelavic to their side after signing the target man from Scottish side Rangers for an undisclosed fee.

Everton will look for back to back wins when they travel to The DW Stadium to face bottom of the table Wigan.

The race for survival also heats up this weekend as Wolverhampton travel to Loftus Road to take on Queens Park Rangers while Blackburn are away to Arsenal and Bolton face Norwich City at Carrow Road.

In other Premier League clashes Stoke City hosts Sunderland, Swansea City visits West Bromwich Albion and Newcastle face the travelling Aston Villa.

Africa Cup of Nations wrap: Mali fight back to secure knockout berth

A 2-1 victory over Group D's bottom side Botswana was enough to see Mali progress to the knockout stages of the Africa Cup of Nations.

Mali looked like they were on their way out of the tournament when Mogakolodi Ngele gave Botswana the lead just after half-time, but Garra Dembele and Seydou Keita scored vital goals to put their team into the quarter-finals.

Botswana had a string of chances before the break. Ngele blasted a left-footed shot over from the edge of the area when he should have tested goalkeeper Oumar Sissoko, before a Tshepo Motlbankwe snapshot from a poorly cleared corner went narrowly over the bar.

Shortly after the break, they finally made the breakthrough. Moemedi Moathaping played the ball across the face of goal and Ngele made a late run into the penalty area to send his nation in front with a slick left-footed finish into the corner.

Going behind only served to spring Mali into life, and just six minutes later Dembele pounced on Modiri Marumo's save from Bayake Traore to get his side back on level terms.

From that point on it was all Mali, and on 75 minutes Keita played a clever curling a left-footed strike beyond Marumo to send his nation into the last eight.

Keita's goal also signalled the end of Guinea's campaign in Equatorial Guinea and Gabon, as their 1-1 draw with Group D winners Ghana was not enough to send them through to the knockout stages.

Ghana scored first, against the run of play, through a stunning Emmanuel Agyemang-Badu shot, before Abdoul Camara equalised on the stroke of half-time.

Agyemang-Badu lodged his contended for goal of the tournament on 28 minutes, flicking the ball up to himself and powering it home from distance past Naby-Moussa Yattara in the Guinean goal.

Guinea were level just before the break though when Abdoul Camara surged down the left beating John Pantail for speed and crossed into the box, only to beat goalkeeper Adam Kwarasey, who had come off his line.

The complexion of the game changed on 70mins when Guinea's Mamadou Bah was sent off for a second yellow card offence following his tackle on Pantail.

Although they needed a goal to stay alive in the tournament, the numerical advantage allowed Ghana to control play in the closing stages as the match petered out to a draw.

Ghana finished top of the group with seven points and will now play Tunisia in the last eight, while second placed Mali (6pts) will face co-hosts Gabon.

Leeds United sack Grayson
Leeds United have lost patience with manager Simon Grayson, sacking him after three years in charge at Elland Road.

The former Blackpool boss led Leeds to promotion from League One in his first full season before securing a seventh-placed finish in the Championship last term.

But the board dismissed the 42-year-old on Wednesday in the wake of Tuesday's 4-1 home defeat to promotion rivals Birmingham, which saw them slump to 10th in the table.

Youth team boss Neil Redfearn will take over the first team on an interim basis.

Grayson left his post at Blackpool to take over the role at Leeds in Decem-

ber 2008 following the sacking of Gary McAllister.

Under his tenure Leeds won 84 of 169 games, with 40 draws and 45 losses.

However, the latest loss leaves the club three points away from the last play-off place, an objective chief executive Shaun Harvey has in his sights.

"We have 18 games to go this season and are still within touching distance of the play-offs," Harvey said.

"We felt with the transfer window closed we needed to make the change at this time in the belief that a new managerial team will be able to get more out of the existing squad of players and make the difference."

London Eye

Eddie Gray

When the draw for the FA cup fourth round was made on January the 8th the two ties that the FA desperately didn't want to happen were created.

The pairing of QPR and Chelsea and then Liverpool and Manchester United would usually be welcomed but recent race allegations between the two sets of sides left the FA in a highly cautious state.

The issue was whether the controversy surrounding Anton Ferdinand and John Terry plus Luis Suarez and Patrice Evra would lead to potential crowd trouble taking the focus away from on field matters.

Tensions around the London derby were heightened further when a day before the match Ferdinand received a bullet in the post.

The FA moved swiftly to diffuse the flaring situation by abandoning the pre game handshakes in order to avoid another Bridge-Terry saga as there were strong rumours that Ferdinand, along with some of his fellow colleagues, would shun an embrace with Terry.

When the match began the England captain was roundly booed and heckled from the outset. The discontent voiced from the QPR

Racism row reaches fever pitch



Anton Ferdinand and John Terry exchange words.

fans was consistent throughout and when referee Mike Dean awarded a questionable penalty to Chelsea, which turned out to be the only goal of the game, the atmosphere threatened to boil over but thankfully no further trouble ensued.

However, in the Liverpool Manchester United game there were further developments in the race row.

It was brought to light after Liverpool narrowly beat their Manchester rivals 2-1 that one fan had made a racist gesture towards Frenchman Evra, the player at the centre of the previous controversy.

This wasn't the only mindless act that occurred during the 90 minutes. Evra was hounded every time he touched the ball by the home support. Let us remember this is the man who

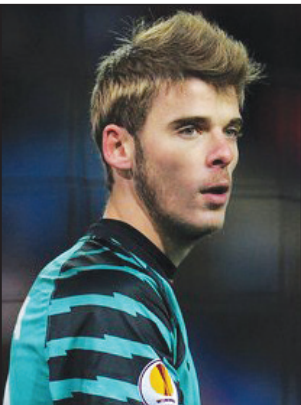
is the victim of a racist verbal attack at the hands of Suarez and yet he was treated as the villain.

This senseless show of 'club loyalty' clearly demonstrates that the English game has become so engrossed with the blind backing of players and teams that obvious moral standards are completely overlooked.

Back on the pitch at Anfield and the recurring issue of David De Gea's form was called into question yet again.

Since the Spaniard arrived this summer his Manchester United career has been littered with mistakes including blatant errors against: Manchester City, West Brom and Blackburn to name a few.

The young keeper looks shot of confidence and it showed when he failed



David De Gea

to dominate his six yard box which resulted in Daniel Agger converting with his head.

It could be argued that De Gea was at fault for the Liverpool winner when a Dirk Kuyt shot seemed to pass him all to easily, although that may be harsh considering the proximity of Kuyt to De Gea's goal.

Of course it is too early to judge whether De Gea was the correct buy to replace Edwin Van Der Sar and at the tender age of 21 he is only going to improve but the current signs look worrying.

Elsewhere in the cup Arsenal came from two goals behind to beat Aston Villa 3-2 and keep alive their chances of a first trophy in six years.

The despair of being so heavily behind at half time followed by the

ecstasy of such a thrilling comeback meant the Arsenal fans truly were on an emotional rollercoaster once again this weekend.

The win provides the London side with a sense of optimism but was the result actually a case of papering over the cracks?

The Gunners have flattered to deceive in recent years, promising much but delivering little.

This campaign they are already way behind in the league title race and mounting a challenge for that particular trophy is near impossible. They are out of the league cup and winning the champions league with Barcelona playing as they are is once again near impossible.

So the FA cup seems to be their only realistic chance of silverware

FA Cup 5th Rd Draw
Liverpool VS Brighton
Everton VS Blackpool or Sheffield Wednesday
Chelsea VS Birmingham
Crawley T VS Stoke City
Norwich C VS Leicester
Millwall or Southampton VS Bolton
Sunderland VS Arsenal
Stevenage VS Spurs

but there are clear problems at the football club that are obstructing the Gunners challenging for every trophy year in, year out.

Arsenal operate on a very tight budget which in many ways is admirable but in others questionable. The summer losses of Cesc Fabregas and Samir Nasri provided huge capital but reinvestment in suitable replacements left fans disappointed.

Mikel Arteta came in to replace Fabregas and has been solid if unspectacular and Gervinho has failed to settle in England since his summer move from Lille.

The fees gathered from the Fabregas and Nasri deals gave the club over £50 million but the direct replacements only totalled £20 million. This is another example of how Arsenal have chosen to pocket cash to remain in an impeccable financial position instead of branching out on a marquee signing to boost trophy hopes.

A further summer signing also shows another all too familiar trend associated with Arsenal. £12 million was spent on hot prospect Alex Oxlade Chamberlain but he once again is a signing for the future and not the present.

The London club always looks to build with a long term vision in mind, which is admirable, but the recent trophy less campaigns is something many fans are urgently seeking to be rectified.

The days of 'The Invincibles' are over and any sign of a return to dominance seem far off whilst Arsenal's prudence in the transfer market continues.



Luca Cetta

Snow wreaks havoc across Italy

A busy week of Serie A action saw a midweek round compliment weekend matches. However, snow caused the postponement of four games, including Juve's trip to Parma. They stayed first however, as Milan crashed at Lazio.

Saturday's big clash between Juventus and Udinese was under threat due to persistent snow in Turin, however thanks to the new Juventus Stadium the match went ahead without a hitch. This was in contrast to the midweek round, where Atalanta v Genoa, Bologna v Fiorentina, Parma v Juventus and Siena v Catania were all postponed due to adverse weather conditions.

The postponement on Tuesday came at the eleventh hour and Juve Coach Antonio Conte was not happy, noting the match could have been played earlier when weather conditions were known. The problem highlighted the need for the renewal of Italian stadia. Juve's modern stadium was able to withstand the elements but the much older Stadio Ennio Tardini could not guarantee the safety of the spectators nor the spectacle on the pitch.

Juventus triumphed 2-1 against Udinese, in a closely fought encounter, which Conte acknowledged was a difficult challenge: "We feared this game because Udinese have quality players and they know how to break



Siena's Artemio Franchi stadium is covered with snow. The Atalanta-Genoa match was called off minutes before it was due to kick off.

with pace. This was a game to win through battling, and we got the victory. It was important because it's a direct encounter."

Elsewhere on the weekend, Milan cruised to victory over Cagliari, but Inter were shocked by Lecce, who won their first home match of the season. Inter were continually frustrated by Massimiliano Benassi in the Lecce goal after Guillermo Giamazzi swept home the only goal of the game.

Genoa stormed to a safe-looking 3-0 lead against Napoli but nearly collapsed to scrape home 3-2, while Lazio defeated Chievo. Roma were held to a 1-1 draw by Bologna as Fiorentina overcame Siena in the Tuscan derby, a match some Fiorentina fans boycotted in protest over recent results. Palermo's 2-0 win over Novara cost Attilio Tesser his job. Atalanta benefitted from a wicked deflection to defeat Cesena by a single goal and Parma drew 1-1 with Catania.

The remnants of round 21 took place on Wednesday night and the Rossoneri began their horror run of

fixtures – including Lazio, Napoli, Udinese, Juventus and Arsenal (twice) – in the capital. A win could send them clear at the top but they fell to goals from Hernanes and Tommaso Rocchi. "We played a terrible game against a team that did not allow us much, but this is not giving the all-clear to Juventus," said Coach Massimiliano Allegri.

Another tactician not enamoured by his side's performance was Luis Enrique, who called periods of Roma's match at Cagliari "pathetic." The Sardinian side won 4-2, meaning Roma are ten points behind a Champions League spot.

That was not the only goal feast however, as Inter and Palermo served up an eight-goal thriller. Diego Milito scored all four for Inter and Fabrizio Miccoli a hat-trick as it ended 4-4. Despite the snow this match did take place and while Claudio Ranieri felt the match was a great advert for football, he rued letting the lead slip near the end.

Napoli once again tripped up, this time drawing 0-0 at home to Cesena. The result leaves them with much

work to do in order to finish amongst the European qualifiers. Udinese disposed of Lecce, with Antonio Di Natale netting the winner. Meanwhile, tactician Emiliano Mondonico is back in football after beating a stomach tumor and his new side Novara hosts Chievo on Thursday evening.

Looking ahead to this weekend, Milan Vice-President Adriano Galliani has already asked that their clash with Napoli be postponed because of the weather. This came before Inter and Palermo battled in the snow so Galliani may not get his wish. Should it go ahead as planned, Milan will need to bounce back and keep up the pressure on Juve amid their big February.

Juventus face Siena at home, with the clubs both refreshed from a midweek rest. Juve expect Mirko Vucinic to return from injury and are trying to ensure the international clearance of Martin Caceres is ratified.

Roma will attempt to put the brakes on a poor recent spell against Inter. This is a pivotal match for a duo attempting to overthrow Udinese for the final Champions League spot. The Zebrette are on the road against Fiorentina, still only three points off the lead but with Lazio breathing down their necks. The Viola are aiming for consistency as they attempt to move clear of the mid-table struggle.

In other matches, strong-at-home Genoa host one of Serie A's best travellers in Lazio as Palermo entertains Atalanta. Bottom side Novara are at home against Cagliari, while Chievo hosts Parma. Finally, two important relegation battles occur as Cesena meets Catania and Lecce faces Bologna. Both home sides are looking to pull themselves closer to their opposition on the table with a win.

Real in box seat for La Liga as Barca slip yet again



Pepe Lopez

Amid the controversy surrounding Real Madrid's Coach Jose Mourinho, ironically there is an overwhelming denial of reality in that Barcelona are in a form slump.

The team from the capital of Spain have edged another 2 points further ahead, to now lead by 7, with 20 of 38 games played. Whilst Barcelona remain \$2.50 favorites on bwin betting to win the European Champions League title over Real Madrid at \$3.50, Real Madrid have surged to

\$1.22 odds on favorites to win the Spanish La Liga over Barcelona who are out at \$3.95. As Real Madrid managed to win 3-1 against Real Zaragoza, Barcelona appear to be struggling to score goals consistently with David Villa out for the rest of the season, as Barca were held for their 6th draw for the season against relegation threatened Villarreal.

Whether Mourinho stays in Madrid another season or not, is yet to be determined, and the vibe in the media is that Mourinho is headed for England, but for now, Mourinho has his feet firmly planted on the ground. Speaking after the match, Jose played down Real's 7 point lead; "Is seven points a lot? The press might think so, but I disagree..."

The people who write that we are the new champions and that Barcelona can't bounce back are the same people who previously tried to create divisions

and conflicts at Madrid. They will claim that we are in crisis again as soon as we spill points again. They're the ones trying to undermine the balance at Madrid. I am calm though and ready to deal with anything good or bad."

Meanwhile reports from those close to Madrid have suggested Mourinho might just seize the moment, as his club is in prime position to capture the Spanish league title from Barcelona, despite much criticism. Jose might just choose to go out a winner, with suggestions that any of the top 4 English clubs Manchester City, United, Tottenham Hotspurs and Chelsea, as well as the England national team are ready to negotiate bringing the Portuguese coach back to the UK.

Barcelona have already begun showing the signs of being the La Liga runners up. Uncharacteristically, Barca stars Leo Messi and Xavi Hernandez have publicly criticized the standard of refereeing in not having a penalty kick awarded in their favor against Villarreal. Pep Guardiola, coach of the Catalan club, was quick to defend his players comments in the media: "Barca do not complain about referees... But a different thing is to say if in this or that situation we could have been awarded a penalty."

If that is complaining, then we complain. I represent a club and I know that tomorrow, in another decision, maybe they will favour us.

And I have to live with it. If we are defeated, we have to do better.

And I know this, having spent so many years at this club."

"I want everyone to know that we will do everything possible to win every title, that they feel that we will try it" Pep Guardiola assured supporters.

Balkan Wrap



Alex Milic

Serbia

The biggest news over the transfer window has been Vojvodina's signing of former Partizan captain, Portuguese midfielder Moreira and the certain signing of former Juventus, Fenerbahce and Ghana Captain Stephan Appiah who is currently on trial with the Novi Sad club.

The other two big clubs Red Star and Partizan have been relatively quiet over the winter break with Red Star's biggest signing being Ghana U21 International Asamoah. The Black and Whites are concentrating on their new start with new Manager Avram Grant in Israel where they have performed very well in friendly matches.

Serbian strikers are doing excellent in their European clubs with Birmingham City striker and Serbia Captain Nikola Zigic scoring four goals in the clubs 4:1 against Leeds United which has propelled the club into a promotion place in the Championship. Marko Pantelic

has also been in hot red form scoring 16 goals in 18 matches for Greek giant Olympiakos.

The national team will play friendly matches against Armenia and France before the Euro 2012 Finals in which Serbia will be watching from their couches.

Croatia

Croatia striker Nikica Jelavic has signed for English Premier League outfit Everton for a reported 6 million pounds.

The tall striker has been an inspirational part of Scottish giant Rangers having been the clubs top marksman since joining the club. A lot is expected by Everton and it will be very interesting to see if he can step up from the Scottish to the English League. Dinamo and Hajduk have both been busy with their winter break trainings. National team fringe player Igor Budan scored a brace in Palermo's 2:0 win over Novara in the Italian Serie A. Miladen Petric scored for Hamburg in their 2:1 win over Hertha Berlin. Luka Modric also found the scorers sheet with a good strike against Watford in the FA Cup. The Croatian Futsal team got off to a winning start at the Futsal European Championships being held in Croatia. The hosts overcame Romania 2:1 in their opening clash.



James Troisi

Greece

Panathinaikos is flying on top of the Greek Super League with a five point advantage over rivals Olympiakos and thirteen points more than third placed PAOK Salonika.

Olympiakos bounced back from a 1:0 defeat to Xanthi to get all three points at home to Ergotelis with second half goals from Pantelic, Mellberg and Fefatzidis. The league leaders following up on a 3:0 win over Levadiakos with strikes to Sarriegi and a double to Toche, they overcame Doxa 1:0 with the only goal scored by Toche. PAOK defeated AEK in Athens 2:0 in the

derby match of Round 19 with goals either to Georgiadis and Athanasiadis. Panathinaikos takes on Levadiakos in Round 20 while the derby match will take place in Salonika as the home side PAOK takes on Olympiakos. The 'red and whites' have boasted their squad with the signing of former Manchester United and Northern Ireland Goalkeeper Roy Carroll who joins from OFI Crete.

Turkey

The Turkish Futsal team was defeated by Italy 3:1 in their opening match at the Futsal European

Championships in Croatia. The Turks must beat their next opponents Russia if they have a chance of progressing.

Galatasaray have a three point advantage over rivals Fenerbahce in the Turkish SuperLiga. The league leaders to however have a match in hand over their arch rivals. It was rather interesting that both Galatasaray and Fenerbahce lost. Gala were defeated by Bursaspor with the only goal of the match going to Batalla in the 50th minute. Fener failed to take advantage as they were humbled by Istanbul in a five goal thriller 3:2.

However both sides bounced back with good wins, firstly Gala thrashed Ankaragucu 4:0 and Fenerbahce overcame a resilient Mersin 2:1 with striker to Biennu and Stoch. Besiktas also failed to take advantage as they fell to a James Troisi strike in the first minute giving Kayserispor a valuable 1:0 win which propels his side into eighth position.

Fenerbahce shouldn't have much problems getting all three points against second from bottom Samsunspor in the upcoming round while Galatasaray is on the road to Gaziantepspor. Troisi's Kayserispor takes on Sivasspor.

73 DEAD AFTER EGYPT FOOTBALL RIOTS

At least 73 people have died after rival fans clashed following an Egyptian Premier League game in Port Said, state television reports.

The deaths occurred after Masry fans stormed the pitch following their side's 3-1 home victory over bitter rivals Al Ahly.

The reported death toll has risen throughout the day on Wednesday as more casualties appear and the severity of the disaster becomes apparent. Thousands of Masry fans flooded the field just seconds after the match. While some celebrated, others attacked fans and players of the Egyptian champions Al Ahly.

Early reports suggest police and security presence appeared to be light around the far end of the stadium where the Ahly players had gathered.

It is reported that the home fans cornered Al Ahly's supporters on the pitch and around the stadium, throwing stones and bottles at them.

The two clubs have had a fractious relationship for some time, with several clashes occurring between fans over the years.

Ahly stars Mohamed Bakarat and Emad Meteb have vowed that their club "will not play football again" after the violence.

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ENGLAND EPL



	Last5games Most recent first									
	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts		
1 Manchester City	23	17	3	3	60	19	+41	54	LWWWL	
2 Manchester United	23	17	3	3	56	21	+35	54	WWWLL	
3 Tottenham Hotspur	23	15	4	4	44	25	+19	49	WLDWW	
4 Chelsea	23	12	6	5	41	26	+15	42	DDWWL	
5 Newcastle United	23	11	6	6	34	30	+4	39	WLWWL	
6 Liverpool	23	10	8	5	28	21	+7	38	WLDLW	
7 Arsenal	23	11	4	8	39	33	+6	37	DLLWL	
8 Sunderland	23	8	6	9	32	24	+8	30	WWLWW	
9 Stoke City	23	8	6	9	23	35	-12	30	LDDWD	
10 Everton	23	8	5	10	23	26	-3	29	WDDLL	
11 Norwich City	23	7	8	8	32	39	-7	29	LDWWD	
12 Aston Villa	23	6	10	7	28	31	-3	28	DWDLW	
13 Fulham	23	6	9	8	29	32	-3	27	DWLWD	
14 Swansea City	23	6	9	8	24	28	-4	27	DLWWD	
15 West Bromwich ...	23	7	5	11	23	32	-9	26	DWLLL	
16 Queens Park Ra...	23	5	6	12	24	39	-15	21	DWLLL	
17 Bolton Wanderers	23	6	2	15	28	47	-19	20	DWLWD	
18 Blackburn Rovers	23	4	6	13	33	47	-14	18	LDWLW	
19 Wolverhampton ...	23	4	6	13	25	43	-18	18	LDLDD	
20 Wigan Athletic	23	3	6	14	20	48	-28	15	LLLLL	

GERMANY Bundesliga



	Last5games Most recent first									
	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts		
1 Bayern München	19	13	1	5	46	13	+33	40	WLWWW	
2 Borussia Dortmund	19	12	4	3	43	14	+29	40	WWWDD	
3 Schalke 04	19	13	1	5	45	24	+21	40	WWWWW	
4 Borussia M'gla...	19	12	3	4	31	12	+19	39	WWWLD	
5 Werder Bremen	19	9	4	6	31	32	-1	31	DDLWL	
6 Bayer Leverkusen	19	8	6	5	26	25	+1	30	DWLWD	
7 Hannover 96	19	6	9	4	21	24	-3	27	WDDDD	
8 Hoffenheim	19	6	5	8	20	22	-2	23	LDDWL	
9 Wolfsburg	19	7	2	10	24	36	-12	23	LWWLD	
10 Stuttgart	19	6	4	9	24	26	-2	22	LLLLL	
11 Hamburger SV	19	5	7	7	24	33	-9	22	WLDDW	
12 Mainz 05	19	5	6	8	27	33	-6	21	WLDDD	
13 Nürnberg	19	6	3	10	19	29	-10	21	LWWLL	
14 Köln	19	6	3	10	28	40	-12	21	LLLDW	
15 Hertha BSC	19	4	8	7	25	30	-5	20	LLDLD	
16 Kaiserslautern	19	3	9	7	15	23	-8	18	DDDDD	
17 Augsburg	19	3	7	9	17	31	-14	16	DLDWL	
18 Freiburg	19	4	4	11	23	42	-19	16	LWLDD	

THE CHAMPIONSHIP



	Last5games Most recent first									
	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts		
1 West Ham United	28	16	5	7	44	29	+15	53	LWWWL	
2 Southampton	28	15	6	7	51	31	+20	51	DWLWL	
3 Cardiff City	28	13	11	4	45	30	+15	50	DWDWW	
4 Birmingham City	27	13	7	7	46	27	+19	46	WWWWD	
5 Middlesbrough	28	12	10	6	33	30	+3	46	DLLLD	
6 Hull City	28	14	4	10	28	25	+3	46	DWWLL	
7 Blackpool	28	12	9	7	45	35	+10	45	WWDWL	
8 Reading	28	13	6	9	35	27	+8	45	WLWLW	
9 Burnley	28	13	4	11	41	33	+8	43	WDWLW	
10 Leeds United	28	12	6	10	44	42	+2	42	LWDWL	
11 Brighton & Hov...	28	12	6	10	31	30	+1	42	DWWWL	
12 Derby County	28	12	5	11	33	36	-3	41	LDWWW	
13 Leicester City	28	10	9	9	38	32	+6	39	DWLWD	
14 Barnsley	28	11	6	11	41	44	-3	39	WLWLW	
15 Crystal Palace	28	10	8	10	27	28	-1	38	DLDLW	
16 Portsmouth	27	9	7	11	32	29	+3	34	LLWWD	
17 Peterborough U...	28	9	6	13	45	47	-2	33	LLLLD	
18 Watford	28	8	9	11	30	39	-9	33	WLLLL	
19 Ipswich Town	28	9	4	15	43	55	-12	31	WLDDL	
20 Bristol City	28	8	6	14	25	38	-13	30	LWLWW	
21 Millwall	28	7	8	13	27	37	-10	29	LWLLL	
22 Doncaster Rovers	28	6	6	16	23	45	-22	24	DLDWL	
23 Nottingham Forest	28	7	3	18	22	46	-24	24	LLLWL	
24 Coventry City	28	5	7	16	24	38	-14	22	LWLLW	

Greece Super League



	Last5games Most recent first									
	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts		
1 Panathinaikos	19	15	3	1	38	15	+23	48	WWWWW	
2 Olympiakos Piraeus	19	13	4	2	42	14	+28	43	LWLWD	
3 PAOK	19	10	5	4	28	15	+13	35	WWWWD	
4 AEK Athens	19	10	4	5	26	20	+6	34	LDDWD	
5 Xanthi	19	8	5	6	24	18	+6	29	LWDDW	
6 OFI	19	8	5	6	21	16	+5	29	WWWLD	
7 Atromitos	18	7	6	5	16	16	+0	27	LDDLW	
8 Aris	19	6	7	6	18	17	+1	25	WWDDW	
9 Ergotelis	19	6	4	9	19	26	-7	22	LDLWL	
10 Panionios	19	6	4	9	17	19	-2	22	LWLWL	
11 Asteras Tripolis	18	6	4	8	11	19	-8	22	WLWDW	
12 Panaitolikos	17	4	5	8	12	19	-7	17	LDLDD	
13 PAS Giannina	17	3	5	9	14	22	-8	14	WLLLL	
14 Kerkyra	17	2	6	9	9	23	-14	12	LDDLW	
15 Levadiakos	15	2	4	9	9	25	-16	10	LLLLD	
16 Doxa Dramas	15	1	3	11	3	23	-20	6	LWLLL	

SPAIN La Liga



	Last5games Most recent first									
	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts		
1 Real Madrid	20	17	1	2	70	19	+51	52	WWWWW	
2 Barcelona	20	13	6	1	59	12	+47	45	DWWDD	
3 Valencia	20	10	6	4	31	22	+9	36	DDLDD	
4 Levante	20	9	4	7	26	24	+2	31	LDDLDD	
5 Espanyol	20	9	4	7	22	21	+1	31	WWDDW	
6 Athletic Club	20	7	8	5	30	25	+5	29	WLWDW	
7 Atlético Madrid	20	8	5	7	31	27	+4	29	WWWDL	
8 Málaga	20	8	4	8	24	29	-5	28	WLDDL	
9 Getafe	20	7	6	7	22	26	-4	27	WWDDW	
10 Osasuna	20	6	9	5	22	32	-10	27	LDDDD	
11 Sevilla	20	6	8	6	21	22	-1	26	LDDLDD	
12 Real Sociedad	20	6	6	8	22	28	-6	24	WLWDD	
13 Real Betis	20	7	2	11	23	29	-6	23	LDLWW	
14 Rayo Vallecano	20	6	4	10	23	31	-8	22	LLWWL	
15 Mallorca	20	5	7	8	17	25	-8	22	LWLDD	
16 Granada	20	6	4	10	14	27	-13	22	WLLLL	
17 Racing Santander	20	4	9	7	17	25	-8	21	DWLWD	
18 Villarreal	20	4	8	8	18	28	-10	20	DWLDD	
19 Sporting Gijón	20	5	3	12	19	38	-19	18	LLWLL	
20 Real Zaragoza	20	2	6	12	15	36	-21	12	LDDLDD	

HOLLAND Eredivisie



	Last5games Most recent first									
	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts		
1 PSV	19	12	5	2	52	21	+31	41	WDWWL	
2 Twente	19	11	6	2	52	19	+33	39	WLWLW	
3 AZ	19	12	3	4	37	18	+19	39	LDLWD	
4 Ajax	19	9	7	3	49	28	+21	34	LDWWW	
5 Heerenveen	19	9	7	3	43	28	+15	34	WLWLW	
6 Feyenoord	19	10	4	5	39	26	+13	34	WLWDW	
7 Vitesse	19	8	5	6	24	20	+4	29	LLWDW	
8 Groningen	19	8	5	6	32	33	-1	29	LWDDD	
9 Roda JC	19	9	1	9	34	41	-7	28	WDWLW	
10 Heracles	19	6	5	8	31	27	+4	23	WLLLL	
11 NEC	19	7	2	10	20	27	-7	23	WWLDD	
12 NAC Breda	19	6	4	9	25	32	-7	22	DWLWL	
13 ADO Den Haag	19	6	4	9	25	36	-11	22	LDLWW	
14 RKC Waalwijk	19	6	3	10	21	33	-12	21	WLWLL	
15 Utrecht	19	4	6	9	29	38	-9	18	LDLDD	
16 De Graafschap	19	3	4	12	17	42	-25	13	DLLLL	
17 VVV	19	3	4	12	18	47	-29	13	LWLWL	
18 Excelsior	19	2	5	12	12	44	-32	11	LWLDD	

LEAGUE ONE



	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	Last5games Most recent first
1 Charlton Athletic	28	19	7	2	53	20	+33	64	DWWWWW
2 Huddersfield Town	28	14	12	2	56	28	+28	54	DWWWD
3 Sheffield Wedn...	28	16	6	6	51	36	+15	54	DWDLW
4 Sheffield United	27	16	5	6	52	28	+24	53	LWLWLW
5 Milton Keynes Dons	27	13	9	5	52	31	+21	48	DLDWD
6 Stevenage	27	12	9	6	43	25	+18	45	WDWLW
7 Carlisle United	27	11	9	7	41	23	-2	42	LDWWD
8 Brentford	28	10	10	8	38	35	+3	40	WLDDL
9 AFC Bournemouth	28	11	7	10	35	35	+0	40	LWWDW
10 Bury	28	11	5	12	36	45	-9	38	DLWLW
11 Notts County	28	10	7	11	43	40	+3	37	WDDLD
12 Hartlepool United	28	10	7	11	36	36	+0	37	WDDWL
13 Colchester United	27	9	9	9	37	41	-4	36	WLDLW
14 Preston North End	28	10	6	12	41	48	-7	36	LDDLW
15 Leyton Orient	28	9	8	11	30	39	-9	35	LWDLW
16 Oldham Athletic	26	8	8	10	32	37	-5	32	DLDWL
17 Tranmere Rovers	28	8	8	12	29	34	-5	32	DLDLD
18 Yeovil Town	28	6	9	13	32	46	-14	27	WLWLD
19 Exeter City	28	6	9	13	24	40	-16	27	LDDWD
20 Walsall	28	4	13	11	26	34	-8	25	LDLDD
21 Scunthorpe United	27	4	13	10	34	43	-9	25	LDDWD
22 Rochdale	28	5	9	14	27	49	-22	24	WLDDL
23 Chesterfield	28	5	8	15	33	49	-16	23	WDLDD
24 Wycombe Wanderers	28	6	5	17	35	54	-19	23	LWLLL



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